A

History of Kashmiri Pandits

By

JIA LAL KILAM

Published by

S. N. DAR

Secretary

Gandhi Memorial College, Managing Committee

SRINAGAR, KASHMIR.

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Gandhi Memorial College Publication—I

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Publisher's Note

The Managing Committe of Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar, has been contemplating to undertake publications relating to the cultural heritage of the ancient land of Kashmir. In all undertakings of this nature, hurdles to cross are many, the toughest part of the job being the discovery of talent that can do justice to the subjects selected. Fortunately, for the Managing Committee, for the first of the series, "History of the Kashmiri Pandits", they had not far to go. Hon'ble Mr Justice Jia Lal Kilam, the President of the Managing Committee, came to their rescue. For his scholarship, erudition, critical and judicious insight into historical research, Justice Kilam's stature is an envy for the tallest anywhere.

The Managing Committee of the Gandhi Memorial College Srinagar, is thankful to Justice Kilam as author of this scholarly treatise; it is also highly beholden to him for the other, in a material sense, greater sacrifice. Justice Kilam has bestowed all rights of publication on the Managing Committee and has reserved no material interest in the treatise for himself. He rejected handsome offers of royalty from other quarters and made a gift of it to the Gandhi Memorial College.

Such a rare and valuable contribution can come from only men like Mr Justice Kilam. The Managing Committee has already acknowledged its deep debt of gratitude to the learned author in an official resolution.

The public and the Managing Committee of Gandhi Memorial College look forward to the learned author for another gift; his first has whetted our appetite and we trust he will not grudge sparing pains for the great cause he serves.

S. N. DAR
(Advocate)
Secretary,
Managing Committee
Gandhi Memorial College,
Srinagar (Kashmir)

PREFACE

This small book was written by me at Jammu in the winter of 1951. But then I stopped at that. For this reason or that I did not feel inclined to publish it though I got some alluring offers from many Indian publishers. The book would have thus remained without seeing the light of the day, had not my friend Pandit Shambu Nath Dar, intervened. He made a request to me to make a gift of the book to Gandhi Memorial College, Srinagar of whose Managing Committee Pandit Shambu Nath is the Secretary and I, the President. This I could not refuse and I at once handed over the manuscript to Pandit Shambu Nath, who arranged its printing. Pandit Shambu Nath himself belongs to a high family of the Kashmiri Pandits. He is a direct descendant of Mirza Pandit Dar who has an assured place in the history of Kashmir.

But then I offer no apology for having written the book, which I might say has been written with a definite purpose. This was to show that a small community also can hold its own against all odds even under most adverse circumstances, provided it has equipped itself with those basic virtues which provide moral strength and, therefore, justification for it to live a life of self-respect and self-reliance. The epoch-making changes that have swept over the country in no distant past have created a sort of fear and anxiety in the minds of many persons belonging to the Kashmiri Pandit community.

These fears and anxieties can be removed only if the people firstly realize the inevitibility of change and then prepare themselves for adjustment to the changed circumstances. The Kashmiri Pandits had understood this secret of life in the past and their history shows that they acted up to this principle all through. At times it demanded of them colossal suffering and sacrifice. But they continued the struggle with methods both right and righteous and succeeded in maintaining their existence as effective partners in the great drama of life. There can be no denial to the fact that the Kashmiri Pandits have had a great past, but they should know that too much emphasis on the past alone is not going to do any good to them. They must certainly draw inspiration from the past, but then their approach to the present day problems must be in terms of the modern world. They must equip themselves with a mental outlook that is neither narrow nor sectarian and with a single-minded devotion, unmindful of results, they must offer a relentless battle to all disruptive forces like communalism, parochialism and sectarianism wherever they exist. If they act thus, their future both as a community or as a group of individuals is assured for all time.

JIA LAL KILAM

Srinagar,
14th June 1955.

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CHAPTER I

A Survey of the Ancient Hindu Rule

I

THE history of Kashmir, as elsewhere in India, begins with the story about the Brahman-Kshatriya alliance, one supporting the other for their common good. The Kshatriya ruling classes made rich endowments upon the Brahmanical institutions and the Brahmans in their turn sang their praises and helped in the creation of an ideology in their favour. The social polity which guaranteed to both an ascendency over others lasted as long as the tribal economy prevailed in the society. The history of this period in Kashmir naturally deals only with the exploits and achievements of these two classes. But such a state of affairs could not last for long. The society did at last emerge itself out of the primitive tribal communistic stage and even in Vedic times we find the birth of a rich trading class. This class by its contact with the outside world became the harbinger of a new set of ideas free from the shackles of rigid Brahmanical tenets. This gave rise to a system of materialistic thought even prior to the advent of Buddhism. In course of time, the trading classes gathered much political power and gradually organized them-

selves in guilds to protect themselves from the undue exactions of their Kshatriya rulers. They sought the alliance of the freed Shudras and husbandmen who had by now begun to own private property in land and goods. In course of time much of the political power fell into the hands of this new trading class and the social rigidity, which was the result of Brahmanical teachings invented to maintain the superiority of themselves and of the ruling classes, began to break down. This created a disturbance in the social equilibrium as it created many more classes. In the course of further development we find the different classes fighting with each other for asserting their superiority. At one time the Kshatriyas asserted their superiority over all other classes and at another time there was a feud between the people and the nobles. At last there came about an unprecedented struggle between the Kshatriyas and the Brahmans. In the mythological literature the Brahmans are said to have been led by Parasurama, and the Kshatriyas by Kartavirjarjuna. This great struggle is said to have lasted for about a hundred years and ended in a great disaster for the Brahmans, though at last they succeeded in gaining some concessions such as freedom from capital punishment etc.[1] As already stated, the birth of a rich commercial class created a breach in the citadel

1. Studies in Indian Social Polity by B. N. Dutta.

of the tribal economy, and freed the peoples' thought from the thraldom of Brahmanical priest–craft, and it was but natural that the ruling classes should have turned now more towards them for help and support than their erstwhile allies the Brahmans, who in the changed circumstances could not be of much use. A struggle between Kshatriyas and Brahmans was therefore inevitable, in which the Kshatriyas were by far the successful party and the Brahmans in spite of securing some concessions, were forced to play the second fiddle. Freedom of thought now became an established fact. Heretical sects with a definite anti-Brahman bias began to grow. The Brahmans retorted by calling them as *Anarya* i. e., those who had deviated from the Vedic path. The seed of hetrodoxy was sown in Magdha Desha, and it was here that the teachings of the Buddha were firstly accepted. It is noteworthy that the founders, expounders and the leaders of Buddhistic thought were all of them from the Kshatriya class, who now allied themselves freely with freed Shudras and Vaishas as against the Brahmans, thus bringing into existence a new phase in class struggle i. e., religious struggle. This struggle lasted for a number of centuries, till Brahmanical counter-revolution succeeded in establishing its hold again, though not without making many concessions to Buddhism, such as installing the Buddha as an Avtara.

In Kashmir, prior to the installation

of Buddhism in the land as State religion, we come across with a string of kings, some of whom were very nice fellows who built towns, constructed canals, and helped agriculture and yet there were many others who freely partook of the moral anarchy that had become the order of the day. It is evident that even before Buddhism had set its foot in Kashmir, there was a great deal of revulsion in men's minds against the performance of the ritualistic ceremonies in a mechanical manner, and in the absence of an alternative programme of religion, moral and social anarchy was the result. But even as it was, there were preachers (probably Buddhists) who tried to wean the people from the path of sin and error. There were also kings who lived a Buddhist life, though without proclaiming themselves as such. Thus we come across with Durnadeo and Simhadeo—father and son—who ruled over Kashmir for a considerable period, and in whose reigns meat eating was banned, and the frivolities and other luxuries which attended the royal courts were completely banned[1]. Similarly in the reign of Sundersen we find a preacher Nanda Gupta raising his voice against the prevailing moral disorder which had reached its peak by then. And Buddhism at last succeeded. With the country passing into the hands of Asoka, Buddhism received a great encouragement. The rise

1. Raj Tarangini by Kalhana.

of Buddhism and Brahmanical reactions to it gave rise to a long drawn struggle between the two rival ideologies. Powerful kings—both Buddhist and Brahman—sprang from this struggle. Some of them were great builders etc. Asoka himself built many stupas and founded the city of Srinagar.[1] The rule of Asoka in Kashmir was followed by that of Jaloka, who is mentioned in Rajatarangini as his son. Buddhism not having yet planted its roots deep in men's minds, this prince reverted back to Brahmanism, built many temples, made rich endowments on them and besides a number of "men well versed in law and religion belonging to all the four castes", were imported from Kanauj where he had led a successful military expedition.[2] It might seem that Brahmanical reaction was successful. But Buddhism was taking rapid strides towards its own success. The result was that not long after Jaloka had to make peace with the Buddhists and built a monastry for them, which he had once destroyed. During the reign of Kanishka, "Budhism flourished in Kashmir and during his long reign Buddhist hermits were all-powerful in the country and the Buddhist religion prevailed without opposition."[3] The great Nagarjuna said to be a Bodhisatva and described as one of the greatest philosophers of India lived in Kashmir during Kanishka's reign. It was

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini. 2. Ibid. 3. Ibid.

during this period that Kanishka organized the great Buddhist Council, which was presided over by two eminent scholars of the day — Asvaghosha and Vasumitra. The Council was held at Kanishkapura[1] in Kashmir and was attended by 500 monks from all over India. During Abhimanu's reign who succeeded Kanishka, Nagarjuna made converts to Buddhism and defeated the Brahmans in discussion and argument. Civil war soon followed and the Brahmans in alliance with a local tribe named Nagas inflicted death, disaster and other untold miseries upon the Buddhists. Chandracharaya, a renowed grammarian of Kashmir, led the Brahmanical side on the dialectical plane. Inspite of the Brahman opposition, Buddhism did not lose its hold on men's minds. Under its influence, Kashmir produced scholars of very great renown who carried Buddhism far and wide. Kumarajiva a great Kashmiri scholar went during the regime of the later Chin dynasty (A. D. 384-417) to China with the message of Buddha and gained a title of great honour from the Chinese savants. He is referred to in China as "one of the four suns of Buddhism" and is "credited with the introduction of a new alphabet.[2] There are other Kashmiri Buddhist missionaries mentioned such as Shakyashri Badhra (405 A. D.) Ratnavera, Shama Bhatta etc. who went

1. Modern Kanishpur, a suburb of Baramulla
2. Ancient Monuments in Kashmir by R. C. Kak

to China and Tibet to preach Budhism there.[1] Brahmans at last regained their supermacy, though gradually. During the reign of Nara I "thousands of monastries were burnt, and thousands of villages that supported those monastries were given over to the Brahmans."[2] Brahmans having succeeded in establishing their supremacy set themselves in right earnest in strengthening themselves and their position. Many superstitious observances and practices were invented. Thought and culture were denied to everybody excepting themselves and the modern Hinduism in Kashmir began its growth But this degraded the Brahmans themselves. During Mihirkula's reign many shameless practices are ascribed to them.

Gopaditya, sixth in line after Mahirkula, expelled from the country those Brahmans who had taken to irreligious and immoral practices and in their stead many Brahmans were invited from foreign countries. Brahmanism regained its supremacy completely. During Meghavahna's rule, Buddhism succeeded in regaining some of its former glory. But it was no better than the last flicker of a fading flame.

Thus ends the first phase, i. e., the struggle between Buddhism and Brahmanism in the history of Hindu Kashmir.

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1. Anand Kaul (Kashmiri Pandit.)
2 Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

II

With the establishment of the Karkuta dynasty (627 A. D.) we arrive at a period of comparative historical authenticity. It was during this period that the Chinese savant Huentsang came on a pilgrimage to Kashmir. Buddhism was then in a condition of decay in Kashmir as becomes evident from his remark "that the kingdom is not much given to faith and the temples of the heretics are their sole concern." But to the learning of the priestly class he pays a glowing tribute when he says that "the country from remote times was distinguished for learning and their priests were all of high religious merit and conspicuous virtue, as well as marked talent and power of clear exposition of doctrine and though the priests of other nations were in their own way distinguished, yet they could not be compared with them so different were they from the ordinary class."

The most important king of the Karkuta dynasty was Lalitaditya Muktapida (697 A.D. to 733 A.D.) During his reign Kashmir reached the highest peak of military glory. He led successful military expeditions in the south as far as Kanauj wherefrom he was accompanied back by the great poet Bhavabhuti[1] and held sway over a major portion of the Punjab in the south and

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

Baltistan in the north. The successful military expeditions are borne out by a letter written in 712 A. D. by Dahar, the King of Sindh to Mahomed Bin Qasim, the first Muslim invader in which we come across with the following passage: "If I had sent against you the King of Kashmir on whose threshold the other rulers of Hind had placed their heads, who sways the whole of Hind, even the countries of Makran and Turan......"

The King of Kashmir referred to in the letter is no other than Lalitaditya. He sent an embassy to China which was very well received there. He was a great builder. The world famous Martanda temple ruins bear eloquent testimony to his love of building and the gigantic irrigation schemes which he inaugurated added very greately to the cultivable area of the country. It appears that a feudal class had come into existence during these days. Its growth was distasteful for Lalitaditya and the instructions that he sent to his Government from an expedition in the north are so interesting that no apology is sought for quoting them here in extenso:

"The people who dwell in mountains should every year be punished without fault for if they get money and fortify themselves they will turn out formidable. Every care should be taken that there

should not remain more food supply than is required for one year's consumption nor more oxen than are required for the tillage of their fields. Because if they come to possess more wealth, they would become formidable Damaras, strong enough even to disregard the King's Commands."

Further he impresses upon them that

"when the villagers have clothes, wives, eatables, ornaments, elephants, horses and houses like the citizens.........when soldiers are raised from one district only, when Government officials establish marriage alliances with each other, then you should know that the lot of the people turns worse."[1]

From the above it becomes abundantly clear that Lalitaditya looked with very great abhorence upon the growth of a powerful class amongst the rural population. A powerful challenging feudal class being in existence he wanted to break its power by all the possible means at his disposal. The conquests of Lalitaditya brought Kashmir nearer to the external world and must have given rise to a rich commercial class generally residing in cities and towns. Towards this class he exhibited a great deal of partiality, for it must have been they who

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

supplied him with finances to conduct his warfare. So great was his revulsion against agricultural population that he exhorts his Government that not more than one year's rations should be allowed to remain with the villagers for fear lest they should become formidable Damaras.

But who are these Damaras who are often mentioned in the annals of Kashmir. For long the various Indologists held that the Damaras were a turbulent tribe who inhabited the northern districts of Kashmir, but the consensus of authoritative opinion borne out by the Kashmir annals themselves is that the word "Damara" signified a feudal chief and did not connote a tribe, though in course of time this term was used as synonymous with a turbulent person or group of such persons. Thus it becomes clear that class struggle in the time of Lalitaditya had entered a new phase in the history of Kashmir, i. e., feudal or land owning classes versus the growing rich commercial class. In his anxiety to support a growing commercial class, Lalitaditya seems to have lost all support of agricultural masses whom he suppressed lest they should become "formidable Damaras." He died while leading an expedition in the north and with his passing away the magnificent edifice of Government raised by him with so much exertion tumbled to pieces. A general disorder became now the order of the day excepting

during the reign of Jayapira (764-795 A.D.). He was a great conquerer and lover of learning. Katayana's commentary on Panini was re-compiled. Vasugupta, the founder of Shaiva philosophy, belongs to this era; and so many other philosophers and poets of great renown. The Chinese pilgrim Ou-K'ong reached Kashmir during this period (759 A.D.). He took here his full vow as a regular monk. He stayed in Kashmir for about four years which time he spent in visiting holy places or studying Sanskrit. From his account it appears that Buddhism was still prominently existing if not flourishing. In this period we come across with Kayastha class who are described as kings, financiers and advisers. Being the financiers of the king, they naturally amassed huge political power. A struggle with Brahmans was inevitable and it is related that the Brahmans brought about the death of the king for his partiality towards this class.[1] It is significant that any new class which sprang into prominence had to measure its strength with the Brahmans. The next eighty years have witnessed nothing but the installation and dethronement of puppet kings, risings of insurgent chieftains, and intrigues amongst rival cliques till we come across with another landmark in the history of Kashmir, the accession of Avanti Varman (855-883 A. D.). to the throne who is the founder of the Utpala dynasty.

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1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

During his reign Kashmir witnessed an unprecedented economic prosperity. Agriculture flourished, and the industries, commerce and trade were in a thriving condition. Extensive drainge and irrigation schemes were undertaken, and the country was freed from the danger of floods. A low caste Hindu, Suyya by name, assisted him in all these beneficent projects. Culturally Kashmir witnessed great advancement. Kayyatacharya, Somananda, Muktakantha Swamin, Shiva Swamin and Ananda Vardhana and Kallata, great Shaiva philosophers and authors, flourished during this period. The feudal barons are seen becoming more powerful than ever before. Dhanava Damara seized a number of villages bequeathed to some temples. This Damara had an infantry of his own, and was so powerful that he refused to come in royal presence though sent for and when he came he came under an armed escort. He was, however, killed for his over-bearing attitude under king's orders.[1]

Awantivarman is the first Vaishnavite king of Kashmir and it is during his reign that temples were dedicated to Vishnu. He was succeeded by his son Shankara Varman (883-902 A. D.) who was an ambitious and oppressive ruler. He conquered the neighouring principalities including Gujrat which was then under the rule of one Alakhan, who by

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1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

his name appears to be a Muslim, though till then the Muslims had not set their foot in the Punjab. He led an expedition to Kabul also as we shall presently see. He founded the city of Shankarpur now known as Pattan, built two temples there and started a woollen industry and converted it into a market for selling and buying cattle. During the reign of Shankara Varman the struggle between the Brahmans and other castes such as Kayasthas reached its climax. The power of Brahmans was broken. The sacred character of their citadels was violated. Offerings which were made to temples, incense meant to be burnt there and the villages bequeathed to them and the riches lying there were all appropriated by the king[1]. He refused to talk in Sanskrit, and always used the language used by the people (Apabramsha). For this he is greatly blamed by the Brahman historians. But he encouraged industries, though at the same time he heavily taxed them. As against the industrialists, he treated the agricultural population with great scorn and for the first time in the history of Kashmir he introduced the institution of Begar (forced labour from villagers). The Kayasthas now became the dominant class who invented a number of taxes and allied themselves with the king. The Brahmans on their part have produced a huge mass of literature in which the Kayasthas have been reduced to a place

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1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

of great scorn and redicule[1]. With the death of Shankaravarman, general disorder set in which threw into prominence turbulent Kashmiri tribe, Tantrins. The Tantrins set up one king after another, according as they were bribed and courted until Chakravarman (922-933 A.D.) with the help of Damaras and Ekangas broke their power. When it is borne in mind that Damaras were the feudal barons and Ekangas the bodyguard of the king, the class character of the strife between them and the Tantrins who were common people representing popular upsurge and recently come into prominence can very easily be understood. But Chakravarmana was himself killed by some Damaras, and after some time the Utpala dynasty ceased to exist and was replaced by the first Lohara dynasty.

During this period, though very much disturbed, by political vicissitudes, Kashmir was culturally quite alive. Pradyumana Bhatta, Utpalacharya, Rama Kantha, Prajnarjuna, Lacha man Gupta and Mahadeva Bhatta have made colossal contributions to Shaivite thought and some of them have been given a very high place of honour amongst ancient Indian philosophers.

III

The Lohara dynasty occupies an important place in the history of Kashmir, for it

1 See Khsemendra's Narmama'a

was during this period that Kashmir came in contact with the Muslim conquerers of India. During the reign of Sangram Raja (1003-1028 A.D.) it is recorded that the "Kashmirians crossed the river Toushi and destroyed the detachment of soldiers sent by Hammira to reconnoitre. But though the Kashmirians were eager for the fight, the wise Shahi repeatedly advised them to take shelter behind the rocks, but Tunga disregarded the advice. The general of the Turshkas was well-versed in the tactics of war, and brought out his army early in the morning. On this the army of Tunga dispersed[1]." Hammira is the abbreviated form of Amir-ul-Mominin, a title used by Mahmud of Gazni for himself, and the Turshkas or Turks is the name given by Kalhana to the Muslims. This passage clearly refers to the last resistance which was offered by Trilochanpal to Mahmud in which Kashmir also sent a detachment of troops[2]. As a result of Mahmud's invasion the Punjab passed into Muslim hands, and most of the tribes on the borders of Kashmir embraced Islam. These people even after their conversion to Islam, continued to come to Kashmir. Some came as traders, some as tourists, and some came for proselytising the new faith. Some of them settled in Kashmir, and made some converts as well. But upon the politics of the country, they did not make any deep impression, at least

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini
2. See part IV of this survey.

for the time being.

Sangram Raja was succeeded by his son Hari Raja (1028 A. D.). In spite of the great anxiety exhibited by Lalitaditya to suppress them, the Damaras had by now amassed huge power and found themselves in a position to flout the king's authority. We have seen that side by side with the feudal chiefs that had become powerful enough during Lalitaditya's reign and which necessitated that ruler to adopt extraordinary measures for their suppression, a class of industrialists had also sprung into existence, who received a special measure of encouragement from their rulers. The rulers in their warfare required financial support which was given to them by the industrial classes, and who as a result found greater markets available in the newly acquired territories. A struggle was therefore inevitable which took the shape of Damaras (feudal lords) versus the rulers. During the reign of Ananta (1028-1063 A.D.) the Damaras rose in rebellion, but were ruthlessly crushed by the king. The king defeated the Raja of Chamba through whose territories the road to Eastern Punjab passed, but failed in Hazara which connected Kashmir with Western Punjab and Afghan territory. After him came Harsha (1080 - 1101 A.D.). This prince who was a jumble of contraries, appears to have represented in himself the confusion of times. He was cruel and kind-hearted, liberal and greedy and

cunning and thoughtless. But he was a great lover of learning and encouraged learned scholars from abroad to settle in Kashmir. The Damaras again rose in rebellion, but the king crushed them with great ruthlessness. But they soon made common cause with his two cousins, Sushala and Uchchala who rose in rebellion against the king. By his extavagance and other ill-advised expenditure, Harsha had weakenened himself financially. To replenish his treasury, he embarked upon a policy of exhorbitant taxation and even robbed the temples of their valuables[1]. This naturally created a great deal of resentment amongst his subjects and his none-too-loyal officers. To meet such unforeseen contigencies, he opened a new leaf in the annals of Kashmir. Hitherto the kings of Kashmir relied solely upon their Ekanga and Tantrin soldiers. But Harsha enlisted Muslims and organized the army on a new model. Each group of hundred soldiers was placed under the charge of a Muslim commander thus making it impossible for his soldiers to hatch plots, or run away from the battlefield[2]. From Harsha's time onwards, the Muslims as a class appeared in the political field. For long did they keep themselves allied with the rulers of the country and helped them in maintaining themselves on their tottering thrones. Their fighting qualities and the royal patronage made the Muslims

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini. 2. Ibid.

a powerful factor in the body-politic. But it took them another two centuries before they became the masters of the country. During these two centuries, the Hindu rule lingered on more dead than alive, crippled and weakened by internecine strifes of the nobles and the restiveness of the upper classes and the resentment of the bulk of the population. After the fall of Harsha, Uchchala (1101-1111 A. D.) mounted the throne with the help of the Damaras. He fell out with them soon probably because he could not fulfil their extravagant demands and dealt a crushing blow to them. In the reign of Sushala (1111-1228) who followed Uchchala the Damaras again rose in rebellion. They attacked and plundered the city of Srinagar and reduced the king to such a plight that he had to flee for his life to Poonch. Bikhshachara, a distant cousin of Sushala was selected for the kingship by the rebellious nobles. He was in constant fear of Sushala and was very suspicious even of his supporters. He organized a cavalry force manned mainly by the Muslims[1]. Kalhana records the brag of this force in the following words: " Every individual Turshka (Muslim soldier) showed a cord and said that he would bind and drag Sushala with it." But records the historian Kalhana, " The Turshka soldiers dropped their ropes in fear and were destroyed by

1. Kalhana's Raj Tarangini.

Sushala in a short time. The Turshkas gone, Bikhshachara was defeated and Sushala again became the king." He was followed by Jai Singh (1128-1155 A.D.). During his reign there was general disorder created by rebellions of warring chiefs, but the king could cope with it and even defeated a detachment of foreign troops which were about to raid the country[1]. His successors were either weaklings or idiots, unworthy of the kingly duties they were called to discharge. Another tribe known as Lavanyas now came into prominence. During the reign of Gopadeva (1171 to 1180 A. D.) the Brahmans gained a great deal of supremacy, but were thwarted by the Lavanyas who sided with the king. During the reign of Rama-deva (1252-1273 A. D.) some Bhattas (Brahmans) who had helped in his investiture as king, having been insulted by him, conspired to install somebody from amongst Khashas on the throne of Kashmir. But their conspiracy did not long remain a secret and an orgy of destruction and plunder was let loose upon them. Some were killed and others suppressed with atrocious mercilessness, and to save themselves the cry was raised everywhere 'Na Batoham......' "I am not a Bhatta." This is the first onslaught recorded in history against the Brahmans of Kashmir. There is nothing very important amongst his successors except that intrigue and insurgency and civil

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan

war went on unabated. The whole polity was undermined by internecine deadly struggle and it did not take much time for a crisis to develop which ended the ancient Hindu rule for all time.

IV

Kashmir though cut off by impregnable mountain barriers from the rest of the world had always very deep cultural and political relations with her neighbours. She had her diplomatic relations with China and other countries in the north. Lalitaditya led his armies as far as Gobi desert in the north. For long the exploits of Lalitaditya which have been narrated in the Raj Tarangni quite in detail were treated by scholars as a mere figment of the imagination of Kalhana, but Sindh ruler Dahar's letter to Bin Qasim to which reference has been made earlier has set at rest all the controversy on this score. Dahar's letter finds its place in Chhachhinama which is an account of the war between Dahar and Bin Qasim given by an Arab eye witness. The nearest Hindu Kingdom to Kashmir was that of Kabul. With Kabul, Kashmir was tied with bonds of religion, but she had also political relations with her which lasted for a number of centuries as will be presently seen. Reference may in this behalf be made to Alberuni an Arab scholar who came to India with Mahmud of

Gazni in the beginning of 11th century and stayed on in India for a number of years. Alberuni has left a book on India in which he has given with great scholarly precision an account of the social, political and economic conditions of the then India. Alberuni writes that "the Hindus had kings residing in Kabul...... The last king of this race (Kshatriya) was Lagutarman and his wazir was Kallar, a Brahman. Lagutarman had bad manners and worse behaviour, so the Vazier put him in chains and occupied the royal throne. After him ruled Brahman kings named Samand, Kamalu, Bhim, Jaipal, Anandpal and Tarojanpal (Trilochanpal)." Out of the seven Brahman kings of Kabul mentioned by Alberuni, we find mention of four in Kalhana's Raj Tarangini with this difference that Kalhana calls the first king Lalliya and not as Kallar as Alberuni calls him, the other three being Kamluka, Bhima and Trilochanpal. Kalhana wrote his history in 1148 A. D. about 125 years after the fall of Trilochanpal, who according to Alberuni was killed in 1021 A. D. There is one thing very interesting about the Hindu Kings of Kabul, and that is they were known as Shahs and their dynasty as Hindu Shahis of Kabul.

About the time when Lalliya, the Brahman Vazier of the last Kshatriya king, usurped the throne of Kabul, there reigned in Kashmir a strong ruler by name Shankara

Varman. His reign lasted from 883 A.D. to 902 A.D. Shankara Varman was as noticed earlier a sagacious ruler, who made his country great, both militarily and economically. He started many industries and greatly encouraged trade and commerce though he is described also as an oppressive ruler whose exactions from the people as taxes were exhorbitant. One thing very important about him was that he established a direct relation with the common people and talked their language instead of Sanskrit. For all this he is very much criticized and taunted by Kalhana, the Brahman author of Rajtarangini. But by such methods he must have secured a substantial backing from his people. Whether it was for securing markets for the articles of Kashmir manufacture or simply to win military glory, Shankara Varman went out of Kashmir at the head of a military expedition, and conquered all the neighbouring principalities including Gujrat which was according to Rajtarangini ruled under the overlordship of Kabul by a king named Ala Khan. Lalliya, the Brahman ruler of Kabul, came to the help of his vassal, Ala Khan, but was defeated and driven out of his own country. The easy victory which the Kashmir ruler Shankara Varman achieved over Lalliya has to be attributed to the fact that Lalliya was a usurper with no title to the throne and had therefore struck no deep roots in men's minds and conse-

quently must have received very little help from the people. But the occupation of Kabul by an outsider stirred the patriotism of the people of Kabul and a resistance movement was the result. The people of Kabul were then, as they are now, very patriotic and seldom brooked interference from outside. They fought Arabs and other Muslim rulers from 663 A.D. to 1021 A.D. but never accepted their suzerainty. Every student of history knows that during this period of about four hundred years India remained safe from any intrusions or invasions from the North-west. The occupation of Kabul by Shankara Varman only led to a grim struggle which reached its climax during the reign of Gopal Varman (902 to 904 A.D.) who succeeded Shankara Varman; and another military expedition was sent by the Kashmir ruler under a General by name Prabhakar Deva to restore order and tighten the grip. The Kashmir General though successful did not press his victory too far. He had realized by his experience that the people of Kabul could not be kept for long under subjection. He started negotiations with them and agreed to install Lalliya's son by name Toramana on the Kabul throne. This was done and Toramana ascended the Kabul throne though under a new name or title, Kamluka, which was given to him by Prabhakar Deva. As already seen, Alberuni in his list of Kabul kings describes him as Kamlu. Henceforth

the relations between Kabul and Kashmir became very cordial and in course of time marriage relations came to be established between the ruling dynasties of the two countries which further strengthened the mutual bonds of amity and concord. Kshema Gupta who ruled Kashmir from 951—959 A.D. married the grand daughter of Bhima who is described by Alberuni as the fourth Brahman King to rule Kabul after Lalliya. We have it on the authority of Kalhana that this Kabul King Bhima came to Kashmir and stayed there for some time and built a temple dedicated to Vishnu which was given the name of Bhima Keshava. The dedication of a temple to Vishnu would show that the Hindu Shahis of Kabul were Vaishnavites and not Buddhists as some take pleasure in describing them as such. The temple of Bhima Keshava is even now existing in a village now known as Bumzu near Mattan, though as a Muslim Ziarat, and is now known as Ziarat Bam Din Sahib.

The name of Bhima's grand daughter was Didda who ruled Kashmir after her husband's death as sole sovereign from 980 A.D. to 1003 A.D. She appointed her brother's son Sangrama Raj as heir to the throne. By now the Turkish king, Subaktagin, had occupied Ghazni and Kabul Shahis came face to face with a rising power which within a short period liquidated the Hindu Shahi rule at Kabul. But the struggle was

grim and a stout resistance was offered both by Jaipal and his son Anandapal and his grandson Trilochanpal. It may be that Kashmir also participated in these wars, as Queen Didda of Kashmir was closely related to Jaipal, son of Bhima. But Rajtarangini is silent on that. But to the final resistance which was organized by the last Shahi King, Trilochanpal, Kashmir also made her contribution. This time Sangram Raj, (1003—1028 A.D.) Diddas' son, was on the Kashmir throne. The Kashmir ruler sent a well-equipped force under a Minister by name Tunga. But unfortunately the methods of warfare of Tunga and Trilochanpal were different. Trilochanpal was in favour of using the traditional Kabul methods of warfare which consisted of retiring into mountain fastnesses and therefrom start depredations on the enemy, cutting his line of communications and harassing his rear. Trilochanpal counselled the adoption of such methods. But the Kashmir General who was both vain and inglorious did not heed the advice and came down to the plains and engaged in battle with Mahmud. Kalhana gives a graphic description of this battle. Says he that Trilochanpal and some Kashmiris of royal blood fought very bravely, but the chances of victory, thanks to the tactical blunder made by Tunga receded back very far. The last resistance movement on the Kabul soil was finally crushed. The defeat of Trilochanpal had very far reaching effects.

The Punjab fell an easy victim to Mahmud who occupied it as a Province. The whole of India now lay bare before any invader who might have chosen to creep in, though far another two centuries no serious invasion was either planned or made.

After the fall of Trilochanpal, his sons, Rudrapal, Diddapal, Kshempala and Anangpala went to Kashmir and settled there under royal patronage. Here also they distinguished themselves by their deeds of valour. Not long after they had settled in Kashmir, that the country was attacked by some warlike tribes from the north. All the four Pal brothers took part in the defence of Kashmir and distinguished themselves by their acts of bravery. Thereafter nothing is heard about the descendants of Trilochanpal, excepting that Harsha, a Kashmir king, was involved in a civil war and one of his Ranis who was connected with Trilochanpal, distinguished herself in actual warfare. What type of kings were these great Brahman Shahi rulers of Kabul becomes clear from a remark of Alberuni who says that:

> "The Hindu Shahiya dynasty is extinct and of the whole house there is not the slightest remnant in existence. We must say that in all their grandeur, they never slackened in the ardent desire of doing that which is good and right, that they were men of

noble sentiment and noble bearing." Kalhana in his Raj Tarangini expresses grief over the fall of Trilochanpal in the following pathetic words:

> "We have described the prosperity of the Shahi country during the days of Shankara Varman. Now we think in our minds with great grief, where is the Shahi dynasity with its ministers, its kings, its great grandeur? Did it exist really or did it not? Tunga returned to his own country Kashmir, totally defeated and left the whole Bharata land open to the descent of the Turshkas."

He further expresses his anguish in these words:

> "The very name of the splendour of Shahi kings has vanished. What is not seen in dream, what even our imagination cannot conceive, that destiny accomplishes with ease."

CHAPTER II

Advent of Islam.

Writing about the people of Kashmir Alberuni says that the people of Kashmir "are particularly anxious about the actual strength of their country and therefore take always great care to keep a stronghold upon the entrance and roads leading into it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them...... At present they do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people."

The invasions of Mahmud shook the Indian soil to its depths, and though he failed to occupy Kashmir, his invasion made the Kashmiris very vigilant for their national defence. The Punjab was occupied by Mahmud. The threat of Muslim invasion was always present. Consequently, they did not allow any foreigners to come in and kept the country closed to all the outside world, at least for the time being. But such a state of affairs could not continue for long. The trading classes, both merchants and manufacturers, who had carried on a brisk trade with the Punjab, were hard hit by their isolation from external markets, and a general unrest, particularly in the cities was the outcome. The

working classes in the cities were without employment and the peasantry sullen and resentful because of the prevailing turmoil. They greatly added to the unrest depicted in the last chapter. Such a state of affairs lasted upto the reign of Suhadeva (1301-1320). The rigidity observed in the time of Alberuni did not last for long, and as we have seen in the last chapter, the coming of the Muslims was at times encouraged by the country's rulers to serve as a safety valve between themselves and the other warring classes. But this infiltration of foreigners did not mend matters. The Punjab was unsettled and as trade with it was negligible, there was poverty and consequent unrest. Agriculture was at a standstill and the peasantry was sullen and starving. What was required was a powerful hand that could restore peace and prosperity to the realm. During Suhadeva's reign many foreigners, mainly Muslims, came into Kashmir. The chief amongst them was a Muslim missionary popularly known as Bulbul Shah —who converted Renchana, a Tibetan prince settled as a refugee in Kashmir where he became king later. He was followed by Shah Mir who came in 1313 A. D. along with his numerous relations.[1] Suhadeva received him well, being the son of a renowned Muslim divine, and bestowed a Jagir upon him. Lankar Chak, an adventurer, also came during

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan

Suhadeva's reign and settled in Kashmir under Suhadeva's patronage. Things went on thus when a terrific catastrophe swept over the country which developed a crisis of a far reaching character, sufficient to pave the path for the epoch-making changes that followed the event. Dulchu,[1] a Tartar chief invaded Kashmir with an army of 70,000 strong. Suhadeva fled towards Kishtwar leaving his kingdom to the tender mercies of the merciless invader. Dulchu ordered a massacre. Thousands were killed, many more were sold as slaves to Tartar merchants who had accompanied him. Towns were set on fire, standing crops were destroyed and having stayed here for about eight months Dulchu took about 50,000 Brahmans with himself as slaves only to perish with all his troops and slaves while crossing Devsar pass.[2]

Dulchu went away from the country. But his visit had upset the whole social and economic fabric of the country. People were in distress. Lawlessness was rampant, and marauding bands infested the highways. The people had lost all faith in their ruler. All they wanted was a strong man who could establish peace with a resolute will. Such a man they found in Renchana, who

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan. See also Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan. See also Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.

had previously repulsed an attack of Khasha tribe where he showed a great deal of military prowess and valour. Without any serious opposition, he seized the rule of the country, though Ram Chandra, the Commander-in-chief of the late king, put in a feeble resistance, but was later defeated and killed. This created not a ripple in the populace anywhere and Renchana became the undisputed monarch. Things got settled so much that not long after, Renchana married the daughter of Ram Chandra. His son Ravana Chandra was raised to a very high position in the State and all seemed well for the time being. Renchana was very much impressed by the sad spectacle of warring sects and creeds that were present in Kashmir. He wanted to establish a uniform faith in the country with himself as its head. He was himself a nominal Buddhist and tried to get himself initiated into the Brahamanical fold.[1] But the Brahmans who were always jealous of sharing their privileges with an outsider, privileges which in spite of various vicissitudes they went through they had largely preserved, did not favour his initiation into their fold.[2] The result was that he embraced Islam at the hands of Bulbul Shah, a Muslim missionary, to whom

1. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini. See also Hassan and other Muslim historians.

2. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.

reference has just been made, and who had continued to stay on in Kashmir. Thus we see that, in order to preserve their class ascendency by refusing the outsider Renchana admission to their fold, the Brahmans not only destroyed their own ascendency but spelt ruin to their very existence as we shall presently see. The unsettled condition of the times, brought about by various factors briefly dealt with above, had prepared the people for very big changes. With Renchana's conversion who now took the Islamic name of Malik Saduruddin, Ravana Chandra and many others with him accepted Islam. Thus a Muslim ruling class sprang into existence. This class also needed support, and they used various methods for the proselytisation of their faith. The simple tenets of Islam backed by official support gained many adherents from the lower castes. Only the Brahmans put a brave front, as we shall presently see.

Renchana died in the year 1326 A.D. He left behind his widow Kota Rani and a minor son Haidar Shah who on account of his minority was not considered for the kingship. Uddyana Deo, the brother of Suhadeva, who had fled during Dulchu's attack and was staying at Swatgar, was brought back from his voluntary exile and was installed upon the throne. Kota Rani married him. The real power remained, however,

in the hands of Kota Rani. She appointed Bikhshana Bhatta and Shahmir as the Prime Minister and the Commander - in - chief respectively. By such means Kota Rani tried to give satisfaction to all the classes. But this arrangement could not last for long. As ill-luck would have it, again another Tartar chief by name Arwan or Archalla, made an attack upon Kashmir with his Tartar hordes. Uddyana Deo, as was customary with the family, fled this time to Tibet. But Kota Rani stirred the local patriotism of the Kashmiris by an impassioned appeal. The people in thousands gathered under her banner and inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Tartars. Kashmir was freed from danger.[1] Uddyana Deo, came back to rule and Shahmir who distinguished himself while defending the country rose very high in the esteem of the people. His sons Jamshed and Allauddin were appointed to very high and responsible posts and he himself was very greatly honoured by the Rani. Uddyana Deo died in the year 1341 A.D. leaving behind him a minor son and Kota Rani his widow. At this time began the real struggle between militant Islam and tolerant but static Hinduism of the day. Kota Rani represented the latter and Shahmir became the rallying point of the forces of Islam. Kota Rani tried to establish herself on the throne, but was defeated

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

by Shahmir who mounted the throne and became the progenitor of a long line of kings known as Salatins. These Salatins ruled Kashmir for more than two hundred years. Thus ended the Hindu rule, not as a result of a foreign aggression, as in the case of the neighbouring province of the Punjab, but as a result of a long chain of events briefly surveyed in the foregoing pages.

CHAPTER III

Spread of Islam

SHAHMIR ascended the throne in the year 1343 A. D. and made a promising good start. He paid his first attention to the improvement of agriculture and the lot of the peasantry. The land revenue was reduced to one fifth of the gross produce. Law and order was established with an iron hand and roads were made safe for travel. Lavanyas a Rajput clan which had acquired a lot of power and influence in the prevailing turmoil of the unsettled times, betrayed an amount of restiveness but were soon crushed, and in their stead, Chaks and Magreys, two influential clans, were brought to prominence. By such methods Shahmir strengthened and consolidated his rule. Islam now was the court religion, but the administration continued in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans. With them the change of religion offered no advantages and the retention of the old creed no loss of status, and they continued to follow their old religion. Sanskrit was the official language and the people conducted their writing business in this language.[1] But a number of Muslim preachers now

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1. Stein : Translation of Raj Tarangini.

began to pour into Kashmir from Hamdan, prominent amongst whom were a number of Sayyids, most of whom had left their country for fear of molestation from Timur any time. Some of these Sayyids had come to visit Kashmir even before the establishment of the Muslim rule, notable amongst them being Bulbul Shah, who was responsible for the conversion of Renchana. His original name is said to be Sayyid Abdul Rahman, though some call him Sayyid Sharafuddin or Sharfuddin Sayyid Abdul Rahman Turkistani. This much is certain that he was a Sayyid of Turkistan and was a disciple of Shah Niamat Ullah Wali, a Khalifa of Suhrawardi Tariks (a Sufi sect). He paid his first visit to Kashmir in the reign of Simha Deo (1286-1301), but returned soon. Next time we find him again in Kashmir and this time he effected the conversion of Renchana Shah, re-christened him as Sadar-ud-Din under circumstances that have already been referred to. With the establishment of the Muslim rule other notable Sayyids began to pour into the country. Bulbul Shah was followed by Sayyid Jalal-ud-Din of Bukhara and Sayyid Taj-ud-Din, the cousin of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani (Shah Hamdan). Sayyid Taj-ud-Din was accompanied by his two disciples Sayyid Masud and Sayyid Yusuf. There also came Sayyid Hussain Simnani the younger brother of Sayyid Tajuddin. It is said that Taj-ud-Din and Sayyid Hussain came to Kashmir

under instructions from Sayyid Mir Ali Hamdani to find if the country could give them protection against the attacks of Timur who was suspected of contemplating a wholesale massacre of the whole lot of the Sayyids.[1] Sayyid Mir Ali Hamadani himself came to Kashmir as will be presently seen. It is said that with Sayyid Mir Ali Hamdani about seven hundred Sayyids came and with his illustrious son three hundred more. They stayed in Kashmir under royal protection and took to the proselytisation of the new faith. They secured many converts to the new faith. Islam having become the court religion it was but natural that some privileged position was guaranted to its votaries. This created repercussions in the Hindu mind, who saw before their very eyes definite deterioration in their former position. In the reign of Shahab-ud-Din (1360 to 1378 A.D.) the resentment in men's minds took a practical shape. A feeble rising on behalf of the Brahmans was the result. The other castes do not seem to have participated in the rising in any large numbers. The king in order to break the upheaval amongst Hindus turned his attention towards their temples which must have provided a meeting place for them. Hassan the Kashmiri historian says that almost all the temples in Srinagar including the one at Bijbehara were greatly

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1 History of Kashmir by Fauq.

damaged. It seems that the kings of Kashmir had by now become completely Muslimised as a result of their contacts with the Sayyids. They began to feel that consolidation of their rule depended wholly upon extirpation of all traces of opposition, religious or political.

As already stated, the Hindus could not look with any amount of equanimity upon the drastic changes that swept in the body politic of their country. Resentment must have been there. Some stuck to their old religion in spite of many difficulties they had to face, but there were many others who either by conviction or in order to gain royal favour changed their religion. The new converts came to be looked down by their old compatriots as people with no decency or loyalty for their time-honoured values. This created a new struggle between these two classes. In the reign of Sikandar one Suha Bhata who after his conversion took the Islamic name of Saif-ud-Din became the leader of the fresh converts. Besides this he was the king's Chief Minister. Both Sikandar and Saif-ud-Din planned the extirpation of the Hindus and obliteration of all traces of Hinduism from Kashmir. Saif-ud-Din had his own axe to grind but Sikandar wanted thereby to consolidate and strengthen his rule. The methods adopted by Sikandar in this behalf may well be given in the words

of Hassan, the Kashmir historian. After having described the great homage which was paid to Mir Mohammed Hamdani, the illustrious son of his great father Mir Ali Hamdani by Sikandar, at whose bidding he constructed a Khanaka (now known as Khanaka-i-Maula), on the site of an old temple called Kalishri, Hassan says "this country possessed from the times of Hindu Rajas many temples which were like the wonders of the world. Their workmanship was so fine and delicate that one found himself bewildered at their sight. Sikandar goaded by feelings of bigotry destroyed them and levelled them with the earth and with their material built many mosques and Khanakas. In the first instance he turned his attention towards the Martand temple built by Ramdeo[1] on Mattan Kareva. For one full year he tried to demolish it but failed. At last in sheer dismay he dug out stones from its base and having stored enough wood in their place set fire to it. The gold gilt paintings on its walls were totally destroyed and the walls surrounding its premises were demolished. Its ruins even now strike wonder in men's minds. At Bijbehara three hundred temples including the famous Vijiveshwara temple which was partially damaged by Shahabud Din were destroyed and with the material of the latter a mosque was built

1. The temple in the present form was built by Lalitaditya.

and on its site a Khanaka which is even now known as Vijeshwar Khanaka.[1]" After having described the destruction of many temples the ruins of which even now bespeak a fully developed architectural grandeur and massiveness, Hassan further on says that "Sikandar meted out greatest oppression to the Hindus. It was notified in the city that if a Hindu does not become a Muslim, he must leave the country or be killed. As a result some of the Hindus fled away and some accepted Islam and many Brahmans consented to be killed and gave their lives. It is said that Sikandar collected by these methods about three khirwars (six maunds) of sacred threads (from Hindu converts) and burnt them. Hazrat Amir Kabir who was a witness to all this orgy of brute passion and vandalism at last advised him to desist from the slaughter of Brahmans, and told him to impose Jazia instead of death upon them. All the Hindu books of learning were collected and thrown into Dal lake and were buried beneath stones and earth."[2] Governmental coercion, coupled with brisk proselytising activities indulged in by the Muslim preachers and also the privileged position which the fresh converts secured succeeded in bringing about a mass conversion. Sikandar himself was fired with

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1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

2. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
See also Mohomad Din Fauq's History of Kashmir.

a zeal to change the character of his rule into a purely Islamic administration and a considerable advance was made in this direction. He fully believed that the danger to the infant State was only from the Hindus. That danger had to be eliminated by any methods. Hence the persecution of the Hindus.

Sikandar in spite of all this had his virtues. He was a great patron of Islamic learning, though he had an equal hatred with the Hindu lore. He introduced many social reforms. He forbade sale and distillation of wines, suttee, gambling, prostitution and even music and remitted many taxes though after having almost finished them, he allowed the remaining Hindus to live only on payment of Jazia.

Sikandar was succeeded by his son Ali Shah who also appointed Saif-ud-Din as his Prime Minister. In his short reign of about six years the persecution of the Hindus continued and even with greater vigour. Ali Shah appears to have been a weakling and an incompetent person in whose reign some outlying districts changed masters. Saif-ud-Din his minister was at one with him for bringing about the annihilation of the Hindu population. Jona Raja in his history gives a graphic description of the plight of the Brahmans in the reign of Ali Shah. Says he: "Suha (Saif-ud-Din)

passed the limit by levying fine (Jazia) on the twice born. This evil-minded man forbade ceremonies and processions on the new moon. He became envious that the Brahmans who had become fearless would keep up their caste by going over to foreign countries, he therefore ordered posting of squads on the roads, not to allow passage to any one without a passport. Then as the fisherman torments fish, so this low born man tormented the twice born in this country. The Brahmans burnt themselves in the flaming fire through fear of conversion. Some Brahmans killed themselves by taking poison, some by the rope and others by drowning themselves. Others again by falling from a precipice. The country was contaminated by hatred and the king's favourites could not prevent one in a thousand from committing suicide..... A multitude of Brahmans who prided in their caste fled from the country through bye-roads as the main roads were closed. Even as men depart from this world, so did the Brahmans flee to foreign countries, the son leaving his father behind and the father leaving his son. The difficult countries through which they passed, the scanty food, painful illness and the torments of hell during life time removed from the minds of the Brahmans the fears of hell. Oppressed by various calamities such as encounter with the enemy, fear of snakes, fierce heat and scanty food, many Brahmans perished on the way

and thus obtained relief. Where was then their bath, their meditation, their austerity and where was then their prayers?"[1]

The persecution of the Hindus or more particularly of the Brahmans has been borne testimony to by almost all the Muslim historians. Hassan and Fauq, two great Muslim historians, have condemned these excesses in unscathing terms. But it cannot be denied that the struggle had both an economic and political background, though it took the form of religious persecution. As already stated, a number of Sayyids came over to Kashmir. They had the blessings and leadership of Amir Kabir Shah Hamdan (Mir Ali Hamdani) and his illustrious son Mir Mohammed, who had vey great influence with the then Muslim rulers, Qutub-ud-Din and Sikandar. The Sayyids achieved great influence and the prominent amongst them established dropaganda centres where meals were distributed free and people were initiated into the cult of Islam.[2] It becomes evident that a Muslim Brahman class (Sayyids) came into existence as against the Hindu Brahman class. The Sayyids now performed the duties which were more or less performed once by the Brahmans. The income which once went to the Brahmans,

1. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini. Translation by Jogesh Chandra Dutta. See also Hassan & Fauq.

2. Kashir by M. D. Sufi.

went now to the Sayyids and the influence which they once wielded at the royal court came now to be exercised by the Sayyids. A struggle was inevitable. The Sayyid saw a potential danger in the Brahman in whose rehabilitation he saw his own disaster. With the aid and support of the Government he wrought his distruction. The Sayyids were a source of great strength for the rulers themselves. They became the king's party. They not only made additions to the loyal bands of "faithful" but even kept a refractory populace under check by preaching that a Muslim ruler partook of the halo of divinity. But the Brahman with a pertinacity seldom witnessed at any other place stuck to his gun. Unmindful of the gains that would have accrued to him by change of religion, and destitute, forlorn, hunted and homeless though he became as a result of his refusal to change his faith, the Brahman did not lose courage. Some of them were forcibly converted, some fled from the country, many more committed suicide, and those that remained in the country went about in disguise from place to place. Though, as we have already seen, Sikandar tried to destroy the whole of their literature, yet he failed very miserably. These Brahmans lost their temples, their homes, their kith and kin, their means of livelihood, but they minded it not. On the contrary, even in their miserable plight they did not forget their rich treasures which

linked them with their past. They felt that they were the custodians of their past cultural heritage—the illuminating treatises on the stupendous Shaiva philosophy, and other great works on literature, art, music, grammar, and medicine—works which have exited the wonder of an admiring world; and wherever they went they carried these treasures with themselves. Judging from the depth of thought displayed in these works that have been preserved, their high literary merit, their insight into the depth of human nature, their poetical flights, their emotional fervour coupled with an incisive logical treatment of the subjects dealt with in them, one can easily imagine the colossal loss to which the world has been subjected to by the acts of vandalism which resulted in the destruction of hundreds of other works which contained the labours of more than two thousand years. The tradition is that rone but eleven houses of Brahmans were saved, the rest having been killed or committed suicide, or went about in disguise or left the country for good.

But all traces of life were not extinct in the Brahmans. In the closing years of Ali Shah's reign the Brahmans began to come out of their hiding. On the advice of Mir Mohammed the king allowed them to live on payment of Jazia. Those who could pay were given a respite and under the leadership of one Ratanakara who somehow or other ingratiated himself into the

favours of Saif-ud-Din, the Chief Minister, they started to organize themselves, But the other side looked with great disfavour upon the Brahmans trying to rehabilitate themselves and upon the advice of a Muslim divine who is named in the Hindu chronicles as "Malan-ud-Din" this Ratnakara was imprisoned and the Brahmans again went back to wilderness.[1]

The reign of Ali Shah covers a brief span of six years. But during these short years lawlessness was the order of the day. The, edifice built by Shah Mir was tottering. Some of the outlying districts ceased to have allegiance to the central authority. Trade dwindled and the time-honoured industries which had won a name for Kashmir were in a state of decay. Thousands of people were uprooted. They went from place to place spreading disaffection and resentment. But a change for the better was soon to be witnessed.

1. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.

CHAPTER IV

The Pandit Reborn

ALI SHAH could not maintain himself long on the throne. He had struck no deep roots in the people. The bulk of the people were subjected to a forcible conversion, and though later on they reconciled themselves to the inevitable, yet for the time being the wound was fresh and the resentment alive. There were many others who, though not converted dragged their miserable existence either by paying Jazia or by passing their days in disguise. The result was a universal discontent, Whether stung by a remorse for his own misdeeds or for the mere love of travel Ali Shah planned a pilgrimage to the holy places of Islam, but on reaching Jammu he changed his mind on the advice of the king of that place and he returned back to Kashmir with a considerable force supplied to him by the latter. He had appointed his younger brother Shahi Khan to act on his behalf in his absence. Shahi Khan came out to meet him, but was defeated by the superior forces of Ali Shah. Ali Shah again ascended the throne, but was soon defeated by Shahi Khan, who mounted the throne now and took the title of Zainulabdin. That Shahi Khan should have won an easy victory

shows that Ali Shah, the rightful sovereign had lost the confidence of the people.

Shahi Khan now known as Zainulabdin opened a new chapter in the annals of Muslim Kashmir. From tenth century onwards and even earlier the Muslims, particularly the Arabs, had almost monopolized the trade in the East. Arab ships went as far as China and Japan. In the fourteenth century these traders had established their colonies in South India, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and even in China.[1] Their contacts with races and religions other than their own had widened their outlook. The enormous gains which they reaped from trade abroad made them keep their countries open for non-Muslim traders too. Fresh ideas poured into the Muslim lands. With the free flow of ideas which now broke through the iron ring of strict isolation, it was but natural that the Governments too in most Muslim countries became very tolerant. Poets and philosophers with a radical outlook came into being and inspite of the rigidity of the Muslim Code there came about a revolution in men's minds. Kashmir also shared the spirit of the age. In the reign of Zainulabdin trade and commerce flourished. Kashmiri traders went as far away as Turkey and with them came new ideas and many learned men. Zainulabdin with his receptive

1. Travels of Ibni Batuta.

mind fully partook of this new spirit and became very tolerant. He turned his attention to the establishment of real peace in the country. He dealt with lawless elements with an iron hand, and strengthened the defences of the frontiers. This gave a great deal of encouragement to trade, and with the establishment of safe communications learned people and traders and industrialists from all over Asia began coming over to the country. Many industries were started and above all agriculture was made a special concern of the State. Gigantic irrigation schemes were undertaken and completed which exist to the present day. Whereever one may go in Kashmir, he will, in spite of the efflux of five centuries, come across with the name of this king. Zainagir, Zainapur, Zainadub, Zaina Lank, Zaina Ganga and Zaina Kadal bear eloquent testimony to the great and glorious rule of this King.

It has already been noticed that the Hindu population was totally uprooted. An overwhelming majority of the people was converted forcibly, though many there were who accepted the new creed with their free will. A good number of Brahmans had left the country and many more were passing their days in ignominy and wretchedness only on payment of Jazia. But they could not openly declare themselves as Hindus nor could they affix their Hindu mark on

their foreheads, much less could they pray in their temples or perform any religious ceremony. But with Zainulabdin coming to power the Brahmans got a respite. Again we find them practising some arts, notably medicine. In this useful art they had achieved from times immemorial a mastery[1] which they had maintained even in spite of the vicissitudes of times through which they had to pass. Their fame began to re-assert itself and in course of time it reached the royal ears as well. Zainulabdin got a poisonous boil which gave him much trouble. The court physicians tried their skill but failed, Jona Raja[2] the historian says "As flowers are not obtainable in the month of Magha on account of the mischief by snow, even so physicians who knew about poisons could not at that time be found in the country owing to Governmental oppression. The servants of the king at last found out Shri Bhatta who knew the antidotes of poisons and was well-versed in the art of healing, but out of fear he, for a long time delayed to come. When he arrived, the king gave him encouragement and he completely cured the king of the poisonous boil." The king wanted to make munificent gifts to Shri Bhatta. But the latter refused to accept any. But when......pressed

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1. Charaka, the renowned authority on medicine, was a Brahman of Kashmir.

2. Raj Tarangini by Jona Raja.

hard, he made a request which was to the effect that the Jazia on the Brahmans be remitted, and opportunities be assured to them to develop their mental and moral resources without any let or hinderance. The selflessness displayed by the physician Shri Bhatta had its effect upon the mind of the king. The request was accepted and Jazia was remitted. The Brahman was freed from the position of inferiority to which he was relegated by the previous kings.[1]

Shri Bhatta's selflessness and the acceptance of his request by the king proved a land-mark in the history of Hinduism in Kashmir. Shri Bhatta's attitude shows that the will to live as a group by themselves was very predominent amongst the Brahmans which was shared by Shri Bhatta in an equal measure with the whole lot of them Freed from the shackles of Jazia and other handicaps the Brahmans started their own reorganization and rehabilitation. By now the Persian had become the official language. The desire to share office with others could not be fulfilled without a study of Persian. The Brahmans who were popularly known as Bhattas took to the study of Persian and in a brief span of a few years they acquired a mastery over this language. But the Sanskrit learning and their religious ceremonies were not forgotten

1. Shababi Kashmir (Life of Zainulabdin) by Fauq.

because this was the only distinctive feature to keep them alive as a separate group. There was now practically only one caste, that of the Brahmans which represented Hinduism in Kashmir. From this did now "Lords Spiritual and Temporal" again take their birth, just as in the past the Lords Spiritual and Temporal sprang out of the *vis* (populace.) The caste was divided further into two sub-castes, the Karkuns and the Bhasha Bhatta or Bhacha Bhat, the former included amongst its fold those who studied Persian and entered Government service and the latter those who studied Bhasha, i. e., Sanskrit and took charge of the religious affairs of the community. But how was the division of labour to be made? It was decided that a daughter's son of a person should be made a Bhasha Bhatta to administer to the religious needs of his maternal grandfather's family. The arrangement was simple enough as it began involving no loss of status to the Bhasha Bhatta, but in course of time this arrangement became responsible for the creation of two distinct classes with a distinctive culture and mode of life and habits with the result that though there is no legal or religious bar, yet the two classes seldom inter-marry these days. In the beginning the Bhasha Bhattas prided at having been given the exalted position of the custodian of the religion and learning of the country and may be that they were looked at with great esteem and regard by the

Karkuns. But for his maintenance the Bhasha Bhatta was dependent upon the Karkuns. In course of time they lost their importance. The rise and fall of the Karkun made a corresponding increase or decrease in Basha Bhatta's economic position. Gradually the majority of the Bhasha Bhatta's became like the parts of a soul-less machine destined to perform ceremonies in a mechanical manner in lieu of a pittance they eked out of the munificence of the Karkun, but some of them maintained their highest traditions, and their fame for great learning and culture resounded from one end to the other. But socially, because of their economic dependence upon them, they in course of time came to be looked down by the Karkuns. Thus the Kashmiri Pandit took his birth in his modern shape, though till then the name Kashmiri Pandit was not coined to describe this community which was described as Bhatta. Even now a Kashmiri Pandit at home describes himself as a Bhatta and it is by this name that he is described by others in Kashmir.

Having cured the king and refused to accept a reward, Shri Bhatta rose very high in the official favour. He was made the court physician and Afsar-ul-ataba, the Head of the Medical Department.[1] His influence

1. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq.
Afsar-ul-ataba might mean the Minister for Health.

both with the king and his own people was very great. This influence he utilised in the rehabilitation of his people. The king was all prepared for this. He wanted peace and prosperity. Jona Raja says "As the lion does not attack other animals in the hermitage of saints, so the Turshkas who were very much alarmed did not now oppress the Brahmans as they had done before. Brilliant as the sun the king bestowed his favours on men of merit (Brahmans) whose very existence had been endangered previously." The result was that many Brahmans who were forcibly converted during previous times were reconverted without any molestation. Those who had fled away came back in large numbers. The king gave them rent free lands and besides imported a number of Brahmans from Jagannath and Yogis from Kurukhshetra. The Brahmans were free to practise their religion and some temples that were damaged during the previous rule were repaired. Sanskrit books that were destroyed were sent for from India.[1] Many Sanskrit books were translated into Persian and similarly Persian books into Sanskrit. A free kitchen was established for Yogis[2] and other Sanyasis and Pathshalas were established for the propogation of Sanskrit learning. In short no stone was left unturned in giving fullest

1. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq
2. Even now a mohalla of Srinagar is known as Jogi Lankar or Jogi Langar.

relief to the Brahmans.[1] No wonder that the Sultan came to be known and is even now known as Bhatta Shah i. e., the king of Bhattas. The Brahmans repaired to the Sultan's Court with their petty grievances and complaints and like the Hindu kings of old the Sultan listened and redressed them. In Zainpur and Zainagir rent free lands were given to them.

The Brahman, the Pandit or the Bhatta proved a source of great strength to the Sultan. In intellectual field he enriched his court, and in the land assessment work his services were unique. The land settlement records were placed in charge of and prepared by the Brahmans. The village administration was totally in Brahman's hands and being the only literate man in the village he was a useful member of the village community. This accounts for the existence of Pandits though in very small numbers in villages with a predominant Muslim population in spite of the vicissitudes through which he had to go in course of centuries that rolled by from the time Zainulabdin held sway. With his apptitude for literary pursuits, the Brahmans took to the study of Persian and within a short time acquired a sound and workable knowledge of the language. This made their entry into subordinate services both easy

1. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq.

and possible. Jona Raja and Shri Vara, the two Hindu chroniclers, have bestowed unbounded praise upon the Sultan for his open partiality for the Brahmans and their sacred books. A sort of Research Department was established which amongst others performed the task of translating Sanskrit books into Persian and vice versa. This opened the portals of Sanskrit learning to the Muslim savants and the Brahmans themselves learnt Persian and Arabic. Both the communities came to respect the learning of each other. A new culture now began to grow which was the outcome of a synthesis in the mode of thought and way of life followed by the two communities. Saints and sages now appeared who preached oneness of God and brotherhood of his creatures. Common places of worship sprang into existence where both the Brahman and the Sheikh prayed. A common poetry sprang up in Kashmiri language which was sung by both the Hindus and Muslims. The language was beautified further by an admixture of Sanskrit and Persian words used to describe highest ideas pertaining to the mystic faith which all of them shared copiously. In spite of the constant changes which took place on the political horizon after Zainulabdin's reign there came about little change in the life of the people.

At the top many Kashmiri Brahmans came to prominence. Some of them were

in constant attendance on the Sultan whom they described in their writings as Suratrana Shri Jainulavadena.[1] He listened with great pleasure to recitations from Nilmat Purana and other Shastras such as Vashishta Brahama Darshana. Shrivara the historian says, "The king heard me recite the Vashishta Brahma Darshna composed by Valmiki which is known as the way to salvation and when he heard the annotations he was pervaded by a feeling of tranquility. He remembered them even in his dreams." The influence of these Brahmans was so great that he forbade the killing of fish in certain tanks and even stopped cow-killing,[2] and also meat eating on some days. No wonder that a Muslim historian deplores that "the king imported back all the practices of the infidels which were once banished from his land."[3] But the king, unmindful of the Muslim historian, trod his path which led to his eternal credit and greatness of the country.

In his reign the country witnessed an unprecedented prosperity. Agriculture reached its highest peak. The produce was as much as it was never witnessed ever since, not even under the glorious rule of the Moghuls. The produce of Shali alone was 77[4] lacs of

1. Sanskritized form of Sultana Zainulabdin.
2. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq.
3. Mulla Bahauddin. (quoted by Fauq in his Shababi Kashmir)
4. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq.

Khirwars (154 lacs of maunds). The land settlement including agriculture was in charge of the Brahmans. For these operations the country was divided into two provinces. Each province was placed in charge of a Qanungo whose duty it was to look after the general welfare of irrigation and to prepare settlement records. Madho Kaul, was put in charge of northern province and Ganesh Kaul in charge of the southern. They both were responsible to an inter-provincial head known as Sadar Qanungo by name Gopala Kaul.[1] Under their supervision huge irrigation schemes were undertaken. Lal Kuhl, Shah Kuhl exist even upto this day and feed thousands of acres of land. As was but natural these three Brahmans recruited on subordinate posts of Patwaris and others, men from their own community. The Patwaris prepared village records. This class of Patwaris lives upto this date. Ever since they have been holding these posts in heredity, the son following the father and so on. Sultans came and Sultans went, some of them cruel harsh and oppressive to the Brahmans now known as Pandits, but the Pandit Patwari on account of the usefulness of his job was left unmolested. There were many other Pandits who filled the ministerial ranks or waited upon the king as courtiers. The notable amongst them was Shri Bhatta himself. He was the

1. Shababi Kashmir by Fauq.

head of the State physicians and held a ministerial rank. The Sultan was highly kind to him. As already seen, Shri Bhatta was indeed a deserving person. Shri Vara the historian writes that it was due to Shri Bhatta that Brahmans rose high. About him it is stated that

"Shri Bhatta was a Wazir of the king and was very high in his favours. On his death the Sultan not only expressed his great sorrow but settled an early endowment of one crore dinars on his sons.'[1]

A short description of the Pandits who rose high in his reign may not be out of place. Sadasheo Bayu was the royal astronomer, and astrologer and held a very high rank. So did Tilkacharya, a great Budhist scholar. Soma Pandit was a very high dignatory and held a very high and distinguished position at the court and was, besides, in charge of the Translation Department. He was greatly gifted for this job on account of his mastery of both Sanskrit and Persian languages. He wrote exquisite poetry in Kashmiri and was well-versed in Persian and Tibetan languages besides Sanskrit. He was the author of a book Jaina Charitra which gives an account of the Sultan's reign. He was a skilful musician and has written a book on this subject.

1. Tabqati Akbari.

He translated many Persian books into Sanskrit and besides this, Mahabharata and Raj Taranigni were for the first time translated into Persian under his supervision and direction. He was a great favourite of the king. Sumitra Bhatta was an astrologer of repute who also was in constant attendance at the Court. Rupya Bhatta was another astrologer very much honoured by the king about whom it is recorded that "he could without the labour of calculation, but by merely observing the course of the planets in the past year, know their position in the year to come."[1] Karpur Bhatta was a physician of renown to avail of whose treatment men from distant lands came to Kashmir. Shree Ramanand renowned scholar of his time wrote an exposition of Mahabhashya. Yodha Bhatta was a great poet in Kashmiri language. He wrote Jaina Prakash and presented it to the king who "in token of his appreciation bestowed many favours on him." Bhatta Avatara (or Bhodi Bhatta) as others call him, was a great favourite of the king. He had Committed to memory the whole of the Shah Nama for which the king had a great liking. The duty of Bhatta Avatara was to recite Shah Nama for the delectation of the king. It is said that the king got unbounded pleasure from his recitations. This man was a great musician and has written a treatise on music. Rupya Bhanda was in charge of

1. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.

the palace decorations and Jaya Bhatta maintained the king's private accounts, and the king's charities were distributed through him. Jona Raja and Shri Vara were the two historians. The former assisted the Sultan as an assessor in deciding the cases laid before him. Shivara was a great musician who was very much in king's favour. There were other Pandits also who were given strictly confidential diplomatic missions to execute. In short the Pandits carved for themselves a place in the body politic.[1]

In the foregoing pages we have seen as to how the Pandits again rehabilitated and reorganized themselves. They studied Persian and in a short period of a few years they acquired a mastery over this language and by their useful services they acquired an influence and prestige which put them on par with any favoured class in the realm. It is evident that the atrocities which were perpetrated on them during the previous rules had not robbed them of their stamina. They possessed it in abundant measure. Those who could not withstand the trials to which time put them changed their faith but those who persisted and went through the ordeal of fire and death came out unscathed and with their stamina undiminished. Zainulabdin breathed his last in the year 1474 A. D.

1. Jona Raja's Raj Tarangini.

Though with his passing away the Pandits lost much of their prestige and greatness, yet the structure of society which they had built during his benevolent rule lasted for long and provided them shelter during the vicissitudes that befell them during their chequered career. The vicissitudes they had to go through were many and numerous: vicissitudes that almost brought them to the brink of destruction, but they survived and survive till today.

CHAPTER V

Pandits during the latter Salatins

HAIDER SHAH now mounted the throne. Though he ruled for a brief period of a year and a few months, yet he upset the base which provided strength to his father's rule. Himself he was a man of weak temper, easily inflamed and addicted to drinking and other evil habits. His drunken orgies lasted for days together. Culturally degraded and with no education worth the name except some knowledge of music, Haider avoided the company of cultured people, and got himself surrounded by a coterie of uncultured people who egged him on his disastrous course of drinking and other debaucheries, by mean flatteries. A barber by name Purni (or Luli as Muslim historians call him) became a great favourite of the king. He amassed huge power in his hands and played a prominent part in the drama of what was to be enacted in very near future. In Haider's reign the Pandits suffered immensely. The reason for this is not far to be sought for. During his father's reign the Pandit was resurrected and resuscitated and placed on a high pedestal. They were in constant attendance on the late king and influenced him very greatly. The result of all this was that a group of upper class

Muslims who failed to share the spirit of times, came to look with very great disfavour upon the policies that were adopted and pursued by the late king. But as long as Zainulabdin was there, they felt powerless, much though they may have deplored in the words of Mulla Bahauddin that the king "re-imported practices of infidels which had once become extinct." With his passing away these forces of wickedness which had been kept in check for long got unleashed now, and attention was focussed on the Pandits. The barber Purni became the mouthpiece of the opposite forces and kept on poisoning the mind of the king against the Pandits. Various measures were adopted against them. For long they tolerated all this. But even the tolerant Pandit found his patience at an end. It is recorded by the Muslim historian Hassan that "the patience of the Pandits having reached the breaking point they rose in a body and set fire to some mosques which were built with the material of the Hindu temples once demolished by Sikandar. The rising was quelled by the sword; many more were drowned in rivers, and loot and plunder was practised with unbridled license."[1] Shri Vara the Hindu historian also describes the barbarous methods with which the Pandits were dealt with. Says he, Nona Deva and Jaya and Bhima Brah-

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

mana and others were maimed and they struggled and threw themselves in river Vitasta to be drowned there...... The arms and noses of many people were cut off, even of those Brahmans who were king's servants."[1] Loot and arson of the sacred places remained the order of the day for a long time. The pressure exerted on the Pandits was so great that in order to save themselves from further troubles— at least those of them who could not withstand the onslaught and the oppression, according to Shri Vara who is a contemporary historian, "gave up their caste and dress and exclaimed 'I am not a Bhatta,......I am not a Bhatta'." But it should be understood clearly that the Muslim masses did not participate in any large numbers in this orgy of brute force and passions. The struggle was at the top meant only to oust the Pandit from the seat of power. True that the common Pandit in the city of Srinagar suffered, but in the country side, the relations continued in a considerable measure in the same cordial manner, as in the reign of the late king Shri Zainulabdin. There the Pandit pursued his course unmolested in his usual routine manner, and the Pandit and Sheikh lived as brothers.

Haider Shah was not destined to rule for long. He died after a brief rule of a

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.

year and a few months. Hassan Khan the son of the late king now ascended the throne in 1475 A. D. A great lover of music and himself a skilful musician who handled many instruments, Hassan Khan started with promise and "revived the laws and practices which were in vogue during the time of Zainulabdin." For some time the things went on smoothly. But by this time powerful factions had come into existence. These took advantage of the king's too much addiction to wine and music and started intrigues which bore their fruit in a terrific civil war; and which weakened the State so much that the country fell an easy prey to the Moghul Emperor Akbar. But Hassan Khan had his own virtues. The seed of cultural unity sown by Zainulabdin "had borne enough fruit in him".[1] Hassan Khan was a great Sanskrit scholar and well-versed in the Hindu Philosophy. It is said about him that "the king freed of envy had learnt the six Schools of philosophy, and the different works of these six Schools became one in him."[2] Making allowance for the poetical exaggeration of the poet historian, it can safely be inferred that Hassan Khan had drunk deep from the fountain of Sanskrit learning and his hatred for Hinduism was at the lowest ebb or had none at all. Shri Vara says that he made a good use of his wealth by building Mathas and endowing villages in

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.
2 Ibid.

favour of Brahmans.[1]" The Pandits performed a big Homa on the day of his coronation. The mere fact that the king permitted such a ceremony to be performed on the auspicious day of his coronation shows that he possessed a fair measure of religious toleration. No wonder that the Pandits succeeded in getting gifts from him as the endowment of villages etc. on them. Describing his own relations with the king Shri Vara the historian says "What has not king Shri Hassan given to me Shri Vara for beyond my worth? He has issued a proclamation about me which as it emanates from the king is a source of great happiness to me. He has given me strong and swift horses and thick holy thread and other articles beset with gold and jewels, and he has also given me beautiful boats with sails, and robes from his own person, and wealth.[2] After paying a homage to "Shri Jainulavadina" (Zainulabdin) as a lover of all branches of learning Shri Vara says that "King Hassan is a master of music." Shri Vara himself was a musician of great skill. He held his own against the Indian musicians who were always in attendance upon the king. There were also Indian dancing girls, by name, Ratnamala, Dipmala, and Nripmala[3] who "danced charmingly display-

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

ing emotions and gestures." With what poetical beauty does Shri Vara describe Ratnamala may be gathered from the following account of this dancing girl. "The king praised the beautiful actress Ratnamala, her forehead marked with Tilaka and he praised her dancing and owned that she had melted the hearts of all by her steps and her movements, by her tremor and action. How she commenced the expected dance: How her gestures, her movements, the expression of her passions and the swelling songs which flowed incessantly from her throat inflamed all men. The vaunt of the skilful is worthless as the straw in comparison with her. Her song was without a fault, her person was decorated with jewels, her beauty was great and she was possessed of merit. The creater made her face like the full moon. The beauty of her face was nectar and a drop of nectar hung from the nose in the form of a pearl pendent...... Thus the youthful king praised the woman in presence of his boon companions and took cups of wine from them.[1]" The king became addicted to such orgies. The affairs of the State were neglected which paved the path for a civil war which continued for a number of years. The Pandits had approach to the person of the ruler. Some of them participated in his drunken orgies. The musicians were mostly

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini..

Indians with whom the Pandits could very easily mix, but in the administration and in the politics of the country they had very little say. Yet they fared better than in the previous rule. They were left in peace to their develop arts and literature. They were left so much in peace that they could build a vihara and a temple, a thing that could not be possible during the rule of Sikandar or Ali Shah. But this did not last for long.

Hassan Khan became more and more addicted to wine. He neglected the affairs of the State. Powerful factions with a definite class basis now came to the forefront. Each tried to amass as much power in its hands as it was possible. The most powerful faction was that of the Sayyids. It has been noticed in the foregoing pages as to under what circumstances the Sayyids came into the country. They started their career as preachers of Muslim religion whose main job was to secure as many converts as possible. They were treated with great consideration by the rulers. It has been recorded by Shri Vara that "knowing that Sayyid Nasira and his people were born of the family of Paigambra and that they were men of great accomplishment and had come to adorn his kingdom and were deserving of honour, the king Jaina (Zainulabdin) had given them very high seats in the court, had shaken hands with them and had shown them unusual

favour of bestowing his own daughters on them and assigning to them estates in the kingdom."[1] It was but natural that under such unlimited royal patronage and favour they should have as a class become very powerful. Having cast off the robes of religious friars they gradually began freely dabbling with politics and in the reign of Hassan Khan they had become a force to reckon with. The Sayyids were one and all foreigners, but with the people they had the prestige of being the descendants of the Holy Prophet. They got in a very large measure the homage from the Kashmiris. As long as the Sayyids kept their class prejudices hidden they remained in power because it was after all the support of the people that kept them in harness. But then class prejudice cannot be kept hidden or suppressed for long. It manifests itself in hundred and one ways. The Sayyids now gave expression to their feelings of hatred for others in an unbridled manner. Hassan Khan was married to a Sayyid girl and as Shri Vara says "it was owing to the good luck of their daughter (the queen) that the Sayyids obtained wealth and greatness *but they regarded the people of Kashmir scarcely even as grass*. The king bent upon furthering the interests of Sayyids acquiesced in orders whatever they were, that were issued by them for their own

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.

selfish ends. They were busy in creating factions and the king was forebearing..."[1] Haughty and arrogant the Sayyids began to create enemies and thereby an organized opposition for themselves. The Kashmiri notables could not brook their high handedness for long. They became restive and even vociferous. But the Sayyids had isolated the king from them. They could scarcely get an audience with him. But somehow or other Jehangir Magre, a great Kashmiri general whose power was sought to be broken by the Sayyids, gained an audience with the king. He spoke to the king in unreserved terms that "these Sayyids O! king, were once exiled but have been brought back. You have yourself brought this curse on this peaceful country........ The Sayyids have further been encouraged by the Turshkas with hopes of support and they should always be feared. They are eager for the kingdom as vultures are for meat. It is not fit, O my master! that you who have many ends to accomplish should devote himself exclusively to one... I am going away for the safety of your kingdom as well as of myself. The country is ruined and you ought to save yourself somehow.[2] Reference to Turshkas (Turks) shows that the struggle was taking the hue of foreigners versus the indigenous population.

1. Shree Vara's Raj Tarangini
2. From Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.

Jehangir who had now assumed the leadership of the Kashmiris collected a small force and went away from the capital in wait for better times. There was yet another group and that was of the Chaks, a tribe of war-like people whose ancestor Lankar Chak had come into Kashmir during the reign of Suhadeo. The Chaks were not heard very much during the previous reigns excepting once during the reign of Zainulabdin, when they rose against the king and were suppressed with great severity. But now when factional politics became the order of the day they with their war-like habits came into prominence and the contending factions sought their co-operation and help. The Chaks partook of the characteristics of both—they were foreigners but their long stay in the country had obliterated most of the differences, physical and racial, that existed between them and the Kashmiris. So it was very easy for them to gain the confidence of one or the other. But for long they kept themselves in the background and sometimes they sided with the one group and sometimes with the other. This shows that their group consciousness had not become very pronounced in the beginning. It was only when after some time the whole tribe accepted the Shia creed that they appeared on the scene as a distinct group to play their own part on the political stage of the country.

The Pandits as a group were nowhere heard in this drama. They were in strict seclusion and moved with great caution. They avoided strife and never participated in any controversy. Even their historians were cautious. Describing the defeat of the royal army in Bhutta war Shri Vara says "I have abstained from giving even a brief account of this defeat in consideration of the present unsuitable times." But in the closing year of Hassan Khan's reign when the power of the Sayyids had grown very greatly—which was further augmented by the arrival of bands of their outside helpers the Pandit was sometimes witnessed on the scene, though only as a victim of the high-handedness of the groups in power. It is recorded that the Sayyids were very fond of hunting and did not spare even those places which because of their sanctity were treated as sanctuaries. A Muni by name Vaisharana who was held in high esteem lodged a mild protest against trespass on his land. The result was that not only he but all the Pandits residing in the locality were made to pay a heavy toll of suffering. An idea of the measure in which their religious susceptibilities were wounded can be gathered from the following: "The Turshkas were powerful and strong archers. They seated themselves in the house of Brahmans who had devoted themselves to the performance of the six duties, they ate from the vessels of the Brahmans the

cooked meat of fowls killed as if in sacrificial ceremonies and they gave themselves up to the pleasures of drinking. The inhabitants of this place were robbed of their domestic animals and rice and other things, and some of the avaricious servants of the Sayyids killed the people in their own houses[1]." This gives in brief the description of the plight of the Pandits. How trespass could be committed on their lands and houses with immunity? How they could be robbed of all they possessed? And how the king much though he might have wished to do so felt himself powerless to render them any relief?

The embers of the struggle between the foreigner Sayyids and the indigenous Kashmiris were smouldering under an external surface of seeming peace, when Hassan Khan died in 1487 A.D. On his death-bed Hassan Khan had expressed a desire that in preference to his minor sons one of the two other princes of the royal blood should be installedon the throne with this condition that his son Mohammad Shah should be nominated as his heir by the prince so succeeding. By this means he expected the establishment of a strong rule and also the minimization of chances of the civil war. But fate ordained otherwise. Kashmir was dragged into the vortex of a deadly civil war which ended

1. Shri Vara's Raj Tarangini.

the rule of Salatins for all time. And what was in store for the Pandits during the next century will soon be seen.

CHAPTER VI

Civil War

SAYYID HASSAN BAIHAQI was the minister of Hassan Shah who was his son-in-law. After Hassan's death Baihaqi regardless of the instructions given by the late king installed Mohammad Shah, his own grandson (and son of Hassan Shah) on the throne. Mohammad Shah was a boy of only seven years. The result was that Sayyid Hassan Baihaqi who now became the regent came to possess all the powers of the State. But this was far from the liking of the Kashmiri party. They organized opposition and the smouldering fire of civil war now burst forth in a terrific flame. Both parties began to amass their forces. The Sayyids were in harness, they had money, and men at their disposal. As against them the Kashmiri party was not so well equipped. But somehow or other the Kashmiri leaders enlisted the support of Paras, the king of Jammu who was passing his days in Kashmir as a fugitive along with a small force. The Kashmiris soon after took the initiative and fired the first shot. A night attack was made on Sayyid Hassan who was killed with thirty other Sayyids. His son Sayyid Ali collected his supporters and gave battle to the Kashmiri insurgents. After

having won some preliminary successes the Sayyids were completely routed. Scores of them were killed and many others went into hiding, and those who were caught were banished along with Sayyid Ali. The power of Sayyids was completely broken along with the pricking of the bubble of their prestige. The base of the Sayyids was the respect with which they were held by the Kashmiris. With the Kashmiris having turned against them, it did not take much time in seeing them exit as a class from the political arena though individual Sayyids there were who occasionally made some noise and then disappeared. Having routed the Sayyids who were till then the main supporters of the boy king Mohammad Shah, the insurgent Kashmiri leaders quite unexpectedly paid their homage to the boy king himself. With the elimination of the Sayyid influence the Kashmiri party thought that they could hold the boy king as a pawn in their hands for furthering their own interests. But not long after this party also divided itself into two factions. Jahangir Magre who had worked for the downfall of the Sayyids now wanted to centralize all power in his own hands. As against him another group under the leadership of Tazi Bat took the side of Fateh Shah who was one of the two princes nominated by Hassan Shah to succeed him. Fateh Shah attacked Kashmir but was defeated by Jahangir Magre who freely availed of the

assistance of the exiled Sayyids who were now content to play the second fiddle under Jehangir. But Fateh Shah again made bold to attack and this time with success. With Fateh Shah's success, another clique of the Kashmiris headed by Safdar came into prominence with Safdar as the Chief Minister. But even in this group another clique headed by Shams Chak, Shringhar Raina and Musa Raina came into existence. They poisoned the mind of king Fateh Shah against Safdar and skirmishes became the order. Safdar in spite of his putting a valiant fight was defeated and killed and in his stead Shams Chak became the Chief Minister. This is for the first time when we hear about Chaks coming forward in the open though it took many more years for them to establish their rule. During this civil war which lasted for a number of years, the worst features of human nature came into prominence. Perfidy not unmixed with flagrant breaches of faith was the characteristic feature of the participants in it. Mohammad Shah and Fateh Shah were their pawns. Some sided with one and some with the other and while both the cliques ostensibly fought the battle of the rival princes in reality they fought mainly for their own selfish ends. Both Mohammad Shah and Fateh Shah lost and regained the throne no less than four times. During these days the country was plunged in a worst phase of lawlessness. Roads were totally unsafe,

trade was quite at a standstill, and agriculture was neglected. Life was a burden and property a misery. People fell from their morals and even the Pandits did not remain untouched. Shri Vara the contemporary historian speaks in mournful numbers that "people are now fond of blameable practices and are ashamed to follow the Shastra which was followed by their fathers and grand-fathers. Men of four castes had graced the kingdom in former days but latterly the people had gradually adopted blameable practices and the ceremonies prescribed for special days in the Puranas came to be forgotten. Why should not the people whose customs are bad suffer calamities.[1]"

Again Mohammad Shah made his appearance. This time with the assistance of Sayyid Mohammad Baihaqi who now became the Chief Minister. Shams Chak and his other Chaks fled from the country along with Fateh Shah. The Sayyids foresaw the rise of Chaks who along with Musa Raina a Kashmiri notable had accepted the Shia creed at the hands of Shamsud-din Iraqi who had begun preaching the new faith in Kashmir. Shamsuddin was exiled by the Sayyids. Thereby they thought they would succeed in stemming the growing Shia tide and also break the power of the Chaks. But this action of the Sayyids

1. Raj Tarangini by Shri Vara.

only cemented the bonds of union between a number of Chaks and Fateh Shah. Again Fateh Shah mounted the throne. Shams Chak was appointed Chief Minister and Musa Raina who was converted to Shia faith was put in charge of some exalted office. But not long after did the Chak and Musa Raina fall out with each other. The Chak was murdered and Musa Raina became the Chief Minister with Fateh Shah, a mute and dumb observer of the drama that was being enacted in his presence and in his name.

With Musa Raina in the saddle Shamsuddin Iraqi, the Shia preacher, came back to Kashmir with re-doubled zeal for the propagation of his faith. Not content with peaceful preachings, forcible methods came to be practised. In spite of Fateh Shah being himself a Sunni, many Sunnis it is recorded were forcibly converted to Shia faith and some of them even killed.[1] But the Pandits were a target of a special attention. Many of them were killed. Many more were forced to leave their hearth and home and migrated to India. About 24000 Pandits were forcibly converted to Shia faith.[2] The property of the Hindus was confiscated. And those who were allowed to live had to pay Jazia which was revived

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq See also Hassan.

by Musa Raina.[1] By such means were fresh converts secured for the new faith. Politically and economically the Pandits were now in the lowest pit of misery and degradation. Previously it was the personal attention of the rulers which had kept them on going. But with the rulers themselves in misery the Pandits simply dragged on their miserable existence. Many amongst them succumbed to the temptation of getting a better living, and found an escape from the existing troubles in renouncing their faith. But there were many who tenaciously clung to their faith and practices. Even during these days of turmoil when life was a misery for anybody, they produced authors who wrote exquisite commentaries upon the Shaiva doctrines. Their scholarship in Sanskrit was at its height. Kashmiri scholars went all over India stopping at different places to hold discussions on various topics with the scholars there. One such great scholar was Keshava Bhatta, a great poet and logician who went as far as Calcutta, coming out victorious at all intervening places. There at Calcutta he had a discussion with Lord Gauranga (Chaitanya). Keshava Bhatta it is said could not withstand the spiritual prowess of the Lord Chaitanya and later became a devoted follower of his, and established his head-quarters at Mathura. Kashmir's fame for Sanskrit learning having

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1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

spread all over India, scholars from all over the country came to Kashmir to drink deep from the fountain of learning here.[1] Pandit Purushottam Kaul was the head of a great institution where training was imparted to students free of cost in all branches of Sanskrit learning. Baba Sri Chand the founder of Udasi sect also received his training in this institution. Not only that. Eminent scholars from Kashi and other places came over to Kashmir for discussions with the learned scholars here. It was only after they had established their scholarship here that they could claim a place amongst the really learned.[2]

With a civil war raging all round, the Pandits betook to the peace time occupation of writing books on history, philosophy and poetry. The ever-changing political scenes had impressed upon them the evanescence of human life and affairs. They imbibed a spirit of detachment and with this attitude they looked upon the world around with its fullest store of miseries. In numbers they were considerably dwindled by forcible conversions and as such as a group they could not make a mark in times of war. It was quite possible that they might be carried by the tide and effaced out of existence.

1. Life of Chaitanya in Hindi (Gorakhpur Press)
2. Life of Baba Sri Chand in Hindi by Gangeswar Anand. Baba Sri Chand was the son of Shri Guru Nanak Deo.

The only alternative left for them for maintaining their group existence was to zealously guard their religion, philosophy, poetry and history. And this they did with a unique pertinacity which could not have been spent for a better cause. And it is this which kept them living in spite of the worst adverse strokes of time.

Musa Raina did not leave even the Chaks alone. Though most of them had accepted the Shia faith, yet for the time being he broke their power as a group. But it was not for long that he had to continue in saddle. Again Fateh Khan was ousted and Mohammad entered back for the third time. Mohammad Shah made his exit again and Fateh Shah became ruler for the last time. Fateh Shah, in order to eliminate the chances of bickerings and quarrels breaking out amongst his own supporters divided the country in four parts, out of which he reserved only one for himself. This time there was some semblance of peace in so far as the Pandits were allowed to go on a pilgrimage to Harmukat Ganga where they used to immerse the ashes of their dead every year and which was discontinued for some years. But the nature itself was frowing upon them it seemed. On the fateful night when they were returning from the pilgrimage they halted on the top of a mountain for the night. At the dead of night they were

overtaken by a terrific thunder storm and lightening which unnerved them so much that they ran helter-skelter on all sides. Thousands of them fell from the precipice into the running river below, many more died with cold and some others, were struck by lightening. The poet historian Shuka says that[1] "Ganga was oppressed with hunger, as it was after a long time that she had devoured bones she surely devoured the men also who carried the bones." Ten thousand Pandits perished in this catastrophe. This event took place in 1517 A. D. The conditions obtaining in the country as a result of the civil war raging all round, can be gathered from the fact that even a pilgrimage to a sacred place had to be given up. Mohammad Shah was again ousted, this time by Chaks. Qazi Chak was appointed as the Chief Minister of the succeeding ruler.

Musa Raina had dealt a death blow to the Pandits. About twenty four thousands of them were forcibly converted. Their sacred places were desecrated and property looted. And those who survived this onslaught were allowed to live on payment of Jazia. The conditions were indeed very deplorable. Some how or other they thought of freeing themselves from this intolerable state of affairs. Under the leadership of

1. Shuka's Raj Tarangini.

Shri Nirmal Kantha a great scholar they held a council and perhaps wanted to lay a prayer before the king. But even this was not what would be tolerable to the ruling clique. It is recorded that one Muslim "Khuja Mir Mohammada (Khwaja Mir Mohammad) on the other hand induced Kak Chakra (Qazi Chak) who was alarmed at the work of Nirmal Kantha and others to give him permission to act against them; and actuated by malice caused them to be killed."[1] Further on Shuka laments: "O Brahmans, where in this Kali Yuga are your Brahmanical spirit and practice? It was for want of these that the sorrowful and the affrighted Nirmal Kantha and others were killed. The oppression of the Mausalas which began in the times of Saidas (Sayyids) was perfected by Kaka Chakra" (Qazi Chak.)[2] Shuka being an eye witness of all this, the pathos and the emotion in his writing can easily be understood. It could not but wound very deeply his feelings at seeing that a number of Pandits headed by a good Pandit should have been made to taste the bitter cup of death simply because they tried to look after the welfare of their people. But Shuka does not blame the Chaks so much as the Brahmans themselves who had forgotten their "Brahmanical spirit and practice" which brought about the death of many good Brahmans.

1. Raj Tarangini by Shuka.
2. Ibid.

It will be no use entering into the details of the civil war which with the establishment of Shia faith took sometimes the complexion of Shia-Sunni riots. This further weakened the Kashmiri ranks because the Shias amongst them sided with the Chaks, an overwhelming majority of whom had accepted the Shia faith. In this context of country's affairs prince after prince came and went away, dragging a miserable existence on a tottering throne for a few months or years and then sank into oblivion. The Kashmiri party weakened itself by internecine quarrels, brought about by their division into Shia and Sunni groups and commensurate with their weakness the Chaks gained in power and prestige. All the high offices came to be filled by them as the rulers were themselves dependent upon their goodwill. During this period Baber and Sher Shah Suri also tried to get the suzerainty of the country but failed. To Baber Chaks offered a brave front which raised them high enough in popular esteem. Kashmiris were divided into a number of cliques and while all fought against all, the last in the line of the rulers Habib Shah was deposed by Qazi Chak who was Habib's Chief Minister and himself became the king.[1] Thus ended the rule of the Sunni Salatins and in their stead the Shiaite Chaks became the rulers.

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1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

II

The Chak rule lasted for a brief span of 33 years (1553 - 1586 A.D.) The Chaks were brave people but could build no base in the country. They had accepted the Shia creed. The bulk of the population in the country was of Sunni faith. Religiously speaking, there was a huge gulf existing between the Chak rulers and the ruled. To this their turbulent character and fanatical zeal for the propagation of their faith made an addition. Qazi Chak affected the forcible conversion of many Hindus and Sunni Muslims to Shia faith.[1] Having once established their rule, they began to quarrel amongst themselves. They could not attend to any work of good Government. It was at its best a military rule inflicted from above and as long as the men at the top were united they could maintain themselves in their places. It was even in the reign of the first Chak ruler Qazi Chak that dissensions broke out in their ranks. His turbulent tribesmen could not brook the stern measures which were adopted by him in suppressing lawlessness. A series of disorders followed with the result that he had to abdicate in favour of his brother, Hussain Shah Chak, who though comparatively a man of catholic views and some education had also to abdicate in favour of Ali Shah.

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1. History of Kashmir by Hassan. See also History of Kashmir by Fauq.

A severe famine in his reign further weakened the Chak rule.

Mogul imperialism was now at the height of its glory. Akbar had brought nearly the whole of Northern India under his way. How could it be possible that Kashmir a tiny speck on the map of India and torn asunder by internecine quarrels, would maintain its independence for long. Yusuf Shah Chak who ascended the throne in 1579 A.D. was thrown out after a brief reign of a year. He tried to regain his throne, but failed. The result was that he turned towards Akbar. Yusuf Shah went to Agra and kept on wooing for help. But after some time Yusuf changed his mind, probably because he felt that the help he sought would in the long run bring about his own effacement. Without waiting any longer, he started for Kashmir. He raised some troops and again succeeded in regaining his throne. Akbar having come to know all this, was angered beyond measure. He ordered that Yusuf must at once come to pay his respects. Yusuf was only too prepared for this, but his turbulent supporters stood in his way. Again there was a turmoil and some of Yusuf's men having turned against him went to Raja Man Singh who was then at Lahore and made a request for the conquest of Kashmir. Akbar thereafter ordered an expedition to Kashmir under Raja Bhagwandas, Shah Quli etc. The

Chaks also made mighty preparations to meet their formidable invaders. In this whole affair, Yusuf played a most perfidious role and just at the moment when victory was about to be snatched from Moguls, he joined them without consulting any of his supporters. But even then the defenders did not lose heart. They installed Yakub Chak on the vacant throne. Taking advantage of incessant rains which cut off the Mogul forces from their base, and converted their camp into a huge marsh, the Kashmir army inflicted blow after blow upon the invaders. Raja Bhagwandas finding his position very insecure, entered into a treaty with Yakub and left the country after securing a promise of tribute from Yakub. Yusuf, fallen from grace everywhere, remained in captivity for some time. He was at last given a command in the Bengal army, but after some time his brain was deranged and he soon after died.

But Yakub Chak did not follow the victory with any constructive effort to mend the country's affairs. On the contrary he himself contributed to the prevailing disorder. The giant of religious fanaticism was again roused from his slumbers. The Jama Masjid, the main centre of the Sunni worship was being repaired. This was very much resented by him. As a result he ordered the Qazi to add the words Ali Vali Alla to Qalima (the holy Muslim

formula) to make it more acceptable to the Shias. This the Sunnis resented and greatly too. An orgy of repression was let loose upon them. Many were killed in a very ruthless manner, many more were flung into prison.[1] The Qazi also was killed for his refusal to make the addition in the Qalima and his corpse was tied to the tail of an elephant and dragged throughout the city.[2]

Yakub did not stop at that. The Pandits also were dragged into this affair and greatly oppressed.[3] A whole sale conversion of the Pandits was planned. But as ill luck would have it for him Yakub fell ill these very days and therefore the idea was given up.[4]

Akbar did not ratify the treaty entered into by Bhagwan Das with Yakub, and was eager to annex the province, when in the meanwhile the persecuted Sunnis sent a deputation, headed by Sheikh Yakub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki to wait upon Akbar. They apprised him of the conditions obtaining in Kashmir, and made a request to him to free Kashmir from the clutches of insolent Chaks. Akbar agreed to their request. A pact was made, the terms of which are

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1. History of Kashmir by Fauq. See also by Hassan.
2 Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Life of Baba Sri Chand.

given below:—

(a) That the king shall not interfere with the religious affairs, the purchase and sale of goods and the rates of food grains and cereals.

(b) The officers of the Government shall have no male or female Kashmiri as a slave.

(c) That the inhabitants of Kashmir shall not be molested in any way.

(d) That the nobles of Kashmir having been a source of mischief in the past shall have no share in the administration of the country.

This done, Akbar, deputed Mir Qasim with an army of forty thousand strong. Yakub Chak also collected an army of thirty thousand but at the crucial hour the major portion of his army deserted him and went over to the other side. Yakub was defeated and the country passed into the hands of Akbar in 1586 A. D.

CHAPTER VII

Emperor Akbar and the Pandits

IN our preceding chapters we have seen the general plight of the Kashmiri Pandits. Both man and nature combined its forces to work for their destruction. There was an acute class prejudice against them and every attempt was made to break their power and solidarity by such highly questionable methods as even death and forcible conversions. In every turmoil that rose and in every civil war that ensued the Pandit was dragged into it much against his will and he was made to pay his toll. In the period which followed the glorious rule of Zainulabdin Kashmir was plunged in a dreadful anarchical state. People got no respite, no peace, and no opportunity to develop the brighter side of their nature. Education was neglected, commerce had dwindled and the world-famous arts and crafts of Kashmir were fast disappearing. Homage to one's religion was paid by reviling that of others. But in the orgy of fratricidal struggles which was the order of the day, it was the Pandit alone who maintained himself on a high moral pedestal. The fire of suffering and sacrifice through which he passed added to his moral stature and in course of time he came

to command a great respect even in hostile surroundings. True, at times his moral uprightness came to be interpreted as hypocrisy, and his observance of religion as practice of witchcraft. But the general mass feeling was veering round them, though there was not a dearth of religious maniacs who found in their ranks a rich field for forcible proselytisation or that of political opportunists who tried to pass as champions of their faith by suppressing the Pandits. But all this did not break their backbone. Undaunted they sped their way unmindful of the blows and buffets that were in store for them in an abundant measure. It is a wonderful phenomenon though no less true that after the fire of oppression they were beset with, they came out unscathed and with great vigour. And when Akbar reached Kashmir, the first thing that struck his discerning eye was the moral supremacy of the Pandit. In "Aini Akbari" we come across with a significant passage which runs as follows :—

> "The most respectable class in this country (Kashmir) is that of the Pandits, who notwithstanding their need for freedom from the bonds of tradition and custom are the true worshipers of God. They do not loosen their tongue of calumny against those not of their faith nor beg nor importune. They employ themselves in planting fruit trees and are generally a

source of benefit to the people."

A certificate like the above coming from such an eminent person as Abul Fazl must speak a volume by itself.

Akbar came to Kashmir in 1588 and stayed here for a sufficiently long period to make an estimate of the general conditions of the country and its people and visited the places of natural sceneries on one side and on the other settled the affairs of the country which had seen no peace for more than a century. The warlike and turbulent Kashmiri nobles were ousted from all places of power and their power of mischief was sufficently curbed. Roads were repaired and travel was made safe. The Pandit too did not escape his notice. He wanted to place him on par with all other citizens without any inferiority attaching to him on the score of religion. The Jazia (poll tax) which was once removed by Zainulabdin was again imposed on them by Musa Raina. Akbar ordered its repeal. This at once removed a crushing burden of inferiority which was placed upon the Pandits. The reaction of the Pandits may be gathered from the following passage which appears in Shuka's narrative. "Formerly the kings of the House of Chaks used to exact an annual fine from the Brahmans owing to their animosity towards the people of that caste. In every house a Brahmana of good family and character who maintained

his own caste used to pay an annual tribute to the king. For the preservation of his sacred thread a Brahmana annually paid a tribute of forty Panas to the king. The good Brahmans had left the country......and the low Brahmans had given up their caste...... Now when Jyallaladena (Jalal-ud-Din) learnt of the condition of the Brahmans, he repeated the practice of levying fines on them...... He announced that he would without delay reward those who would respect the Brahmans of Kashmir...... The Brahmans versed in Vedas blessed the king."[1]

But the munificence of the Emperor did not stop here. The Pandits plight which can be gathered from the words that follow was indeed pitiable. "Ono thousand cows were used to be killed every day without any opposition under the orders of the Chak rulers. Brahmans were over-powered as sun by darkness...... The means of their livelihood was consumed. They did not remain in the country, as deer do not stay in the forest which is burnt. As they left the country, they sometimes felt alarm in the way, and sometimes they were the objects of laughter and reproach."[2] This is the narrative of an eye witness which is fully supported by the Muslim historians.

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1. Shuka's Raj Tarangini
2. Ibid.

If after all this, the Pandits had maintained their virtues to the extent of their being called as the "most respectable class", surely there must have been something unique about their social structure which kept them alive under most adverse circumstances.

Akbar evinced great interest in the rehabilitation of the Pandits. They were received in audience where they related their grievances to him. The Emperor listened to their grievances with great sympathy and commands were issued for their immediate redressal. Rent free villages were reserved for them. Aditya Pandita, a Kashmiri was appointed to effect a distribution of these lands amongst the Pandits. Ramdas who accompanied Akbar to Kashmir has been praised beyond all measure by the Kashmiri historians for his interesting himself on behalf of the Pandits. During his stay in Kashmir Akbar participated in the national festivals of the Pandits. On the 13th of Bhadoon which is celebrated by the Pandits as the birthday of Vitasta (river Jhelum) he ordered illuminations all over the city and himself participated in the festivities. All this was a great and a descisive step taken towards recognizing their distinct social existence. As a group they again came into prominence.

Mogul rule in Kashmir opened a new chapter in the annals of Kashmir.

After Kanishka it was perhaps for the first time that Kashmir was linked with a vast empire. Roads were constructed that made travel both easy and safe. Trade and commerce developed and with this the indigenous arts, crafts and industries received a great deal of encouragement. This gave rise to a rich commercial class amongst the Kashmiris, though in matters of administration the Kashmiri Muslims do not figure very high. This was but natural. Even after Kashmir had passed into Mogul hands, there were rebellions mainly backed by the Kashmiri notables for whom the establishment of a vigorous and a strong rule was a challenge to their very existence. And Akbar was not unmindful of this. One of the conditions in the pact which preceded Akbar's military action in Kashmir was that the Kashmiri notables should be deprived of any share in the governance of the country. No place of administrative trust was reserved for them. Subedars (Viceroys) were deputed from Delhi who brought their own assistants to work under them and whenever the necessity of utilizing the local talent came, they much preferred the Pandit who was politically harmless. The most important work which confronted the administration was the preparation of a land assessment report. Qazi Nurullah and Qazi Ali were deputed from Delhi for the preparation of a land settlement report. Even during the terrific vicissitudes through

which the Pandits had to pass, the preparation of the land records remained in their sole charge. They were treated as experts in this branch of administration. It was because of his special knowledge of the land assessment work that Pandit Tota Ram who later acted as the Peshkar to the first Mogul Viceroy Mirza Yusuf Khan was appointed to assist Qazis Nurullah and Ali. Together they produced a report which became the basis of land settlement. But in spite of itself the Mogul rule produced a silent and steady revolution in the body politic of the country. True, that they did not favour keeping of political power in the native Muslim hands. But they could not prevent the growth amongst them of a rich trading class either. These people went every year to India with their merchandize and came back laden with riches and fresh ideas. They amassed huge influence and even criticized the Government. Even though they had no hand in the Government, yet they did not strive for it. In the first instance the Mogul rule brought peace and even some prosperity for the people at large. A general rising of the people who were now passing through times which stood in a marked contrast to the days of Chak sway was out of question. And the upper classes had enough opportunity to earn money and they had no reason to disturb the

status quo. Besides a military rising was a sheer madness. A puny country like Kashmir could hardly stand the organized might of the Empire. Along with the growth of a Muslim commercial class, Hindu traders from abroad came in numbers to Kashmir and settled in the country.[1] Gradually they appropriated a large amount of export trade in their own hands. But it took a hundred years more before a struggle against them could develop. For the time being there was an alround prospect of peace and prosperity in an abundant measure.

For the Pandits the establishment of Mogul rule opened a new vista. They were now linked with India. That provided for them a rich and a fresh field. There they went every year—some as pilgrims to the holy places and some in search of a living. Gradually there sprang up Pandit colonies in Agra and Delhi. There also they maintained their separate identity and came to be known as Kashmiri Pandits, a term said to have been invented by Emperor Mohammad Shah on a representation by Pandit Jai Ram Bhan to distinguish them from the Brahmans of other parts of India. There the Pandits who had already acquired a mastery over the Persian language were well-received in the literary circles.

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul. See also Fauq's History.

They wrote exquisite poetry in this language. To mention one amongst scores of them referance may be made to Pandit Chandra Bhan who was a great scholar and was ranked with first class poets of the day. Chandra Bhan was a great favourite of both Shah Jehan and Dara Shiko. The knowledge of Persian stood the Pandits in very good stead even in the early days of the British rule. The British had to deal with records maintained in Persian language. The result of all this was that Pandits came to be employed in Government services in large numbers and at the Bar where a knowledge of Persian was necessary for the interpretation of documents written mainly in Persian they rose very high.

After a stay of a few months Akbar left Kashmir. A number of Pandits who were encouraged by the treatment they received at his hands left Kashmir along with him. Chief amongst this group was Pandit Sada Kaul who settled at Agra. Sada Kaul lived a long life and was very well treated both by Jehangir and Shah Jehan, the latter went to the extent of granting him a Mansab and besides granted him a Jagir, houses and the following titles: Itmadulsaltanat, Mashirul-Mulk, Mirza Raja and Gamkhuar.[1] The family is now known as Gamkhuar family. During the Mogul

1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

history the scions of this family played a very prominent part which will be referred to at the proper place. This Pandit group established its first colony at Agra wherefrom they spread to other towns of India where they where driven by the exisgencies of service or other causes. Having migrated in a group these Pandits successfully maintained their group identity. They followed the same customs and religious observances as where in vogue in their mother country and did not marry outside their community. This necessitated them to keep their connections with Kashmir in tact which on account of safety of travel was not a difficult job. In course of time their Bachbhats, Priests and Purohits also followed them and migrated from Kashmir and settled in Agra and Delhi. Thus a class of Pandits with definite group characteristics came into existence in India which was able to hold its own even in a strange land. Being well-versed in Persian they were freely admitted in literary circles which were till then the close preserve of the Muslim upper classes. This brought about a sort of cultural exchange between them and the Muslims and though in his orthodoxy the Pandit was at its highest, yet that did not stand in his way of establishing cultural links with the Muslims. This has remained a characteristic feature of the Pandits all along.

CHAPTER VIII

Pandits and the latter Moguls

WE have noticed in the preceding chapter that the policy of the Moguls was to keep the Kashmiris ousted from the higher spheres of administration, though it was at the invitation of some Kashmiri notables themselves that Akbar entered Kashmir as a victor. There was enough lawlessness in the country which was mainly the result of the civil war which raged in the country for about a century. The people who counted were divided and sub-divided into groups and cliques whose main pastime was intrigue and mutual wrangling. Kashmir was a frontier province. Maintenance of peace here was therefore a pre-requisite for the safety of the Empire itself which had now engulfed the whole of northern India. But as long as the Kashmiri notables would remain in power, peace would be an impossibility. Their power was to be broken. So the fourth condition in the pact made by the Kashmiri notables with Akbar and to which reference has been made previously was "that the notables of Kashmir having been a source of mischief in the past shall have no share in the administration of the country." As against them, Subedars (Viceroys) came to be

deputed from India, who came to Kashmir followed by a retinue of their trusted men. They were placed in charge of more important offices. Powerful Muslim families like that of Shahmiris, Chaks, Magres, Rainas, Maliks, Bhats etc. who had for centuries been the masters of the destiny of the country now fell from their high pedestal and within the short span of a generation they became unknown to history. No Kashmiri Muslim was recruited in the army. Their martial spirit was curbed and crushed. A Mogul army of occupation was placed in the country. The main occupation of the bulk of population was now the peaceful profession of agriculture and petty shop-keeping. In the whole of the Mogul Kashmir we come across with very few Kashmiri Muslims who might have made a mark in history.[1] But in spite of this clear policy of keeping influential Muslim Kashmiris down another class of Kashmiris now sprang into existence which though not directly concerned with administration amassed huge power though in another direction. The Moguls established a strong link between Kashmir and India. The roads were safe. Trade and commerce increased. Kashmir was known for its industries from times immemorial. Shawl industry now flourished. Millions

1. Aurangzeb by Jadunath Sarkar based on Khwaja Azam's History of Kashmir.

worth of shawls were manufactured and exported to India for which there was a great demand at the court. In place of the warlords of a previous regime commercial magnates now appeared on the scene. Year after year they went to Agra and Delhi and as their clientele was in higher circles, they silently came to weild an influence even in matters of administration by carrying tales about the merits and otherwise of the administration. But even then they did not dabble with politics, and kept themselves contented with only amassing wealth. In the closing years of the Mogul rule this class had become powerful enough, and their share in bringing about the downfall of the Mogul rule in Kashmir was no mean one.

With regard to the Pandits the policy of the Moguls was different. The Moguls looked upon them as the "most respectable class." They had kept themselves aloof from the orgies of civil war, and in spite of sufferings that they had to undergo, they did not forget the cultural side of their heritage. They studied both Persian and Sanskrit and wrote exquisite books on poetry and philosophy in these languages. In this period we came across with a galaxy of eminent scholars and savants whose contributions to history and philosophy are unique—unique in this sense that in the thunder and lightening of a

stormy political weather they found time to write on subjects which needed a close study in highly peaceful times. Shri Vara and Praja Bhat, two great historians, Shivupadhyaya, the Shaiva philosopher, Shiv Varma, the grammarian, Ratna Kantha and Bal Bhatta, Shaiva philosophers, Somadeva, Sahib Kaula,. author of Tantric books, Narain Kaul, the historian and others belong to this period. The torch of the ancient learning of this ancient land was kept burning even in the storm of the prevailing times. Akbar was always accompanied by eminent scholars. No wonder that the Pandits attracted their attention and thus came to be looked as "the most respectable class" and perhaps rightly.

But even the Pandits seldom reached the top, though sometimes they were appointed as Peshkars to the Mogul Subedars. But in marked contrast to the Muslims the ranks of army were not kept closed to them and for long the defence of the border areas was kept entrusted to them, which in view of the contiguity of Yagistani areas was a job of very great responsibility. This can very easily be understood. The frontier tribes were all of them Muslims. A Hindu commander could be very safely trusted to deal with them. In Mogul history we come across with Rajput generals appointed even to the Governorship of Kabul. Following the same

policy, the Kashmiri Pandits were appointed to the military command on the frontiers. Miru Pandit whose ancestors had migrated from Kashmir in the time of Sikandar (1394 to 1417 A.D.) and settled in the Bahmani kingdom in the south during Feroz Shah's reign was appointed as the officer in command of the forts in Kamraj province. Miru Pandit himself was in charge of Golkanda fort and his family was at Ellichpur (Deccan.) Having left the service of the Golkanda chief the Pandit came to Delhi, where with the kindly offices of a benefactor Hakim Abdul Fateh of Shiraz he was appointed to a command in Nur Jehan's body-guard. Not long after did Miru Pandit get a chance of showing his military prowess. Mahabat Khan who had fallen from the royal favour was called to answer some charges. Jehangir was this time at Jhelum where went Mahabat Khan with his faithful Rajputs and took Jehangir as his prisoner. Nur Jehan collected her forces and succeeded in freeing Jehangir from Mahabat Khan's captivity. Miru Pandit distinguished himself by his military skill in this affair and came to the notice of the Emperor. Jehangir soon after went to Kashmir. As a mark of royal favour he took Miru Pandit with himself and even permitted him to settle in Kashmir after an absence of more than 200 years. Miru Pandit was granted extensive Jagirs and

besides that he was made the Governor of Kamraj with authority to build and supervise forts on the borders.[1] Forts were built by Miru Pandit and his sons at Sopore, Baramulla, Shrivapur, etc. Miru Pandit recruited people from Muzaffarbad and Uttara and Lolab to man his forces. The efficient administration of Miru Pandit elicted highest favours from his Mogul overlord. Further Jagirs were given to him in lieu of his military services. Bulaqi Pandit, the fifth in descent from Miru Pandit was as usual in charge of the border defence. By now the Mogul rule had considerably weakened. The raids of Yagistani robber bands had become very common and the task of defence more ardous. But Bulaqi Pandit took war in the enemy's territory, and having inflicted a crushing blow upon the raiders, returned with a number of prisoners. A truce was effected. The leaders of the Yagastanis swore by the Holy Quran that in future they would desist from raiding Kashmir, only if the prisoners were released and other measures abondoned. This was done and peace was secured that side.[2] Bulaqi Pandit was succeeded by his son Makund Pandit. He could not pull on well with the Subedar. The result was that he left Kashmir in stealth

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1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Tarikhi aqwami Kashmir; see also History of Dar family compiled by Krishna Dar.

along with his family. He left his family at Kishtwar and himself proceeded to Delhi. There he related the circumstances which led to his leaving Kashmir, to Emperor Mohammad Shah. The Emperor received him kindly and well and granted him a Khillat and put him in charge of the revenue administration. He even changed the Subedar. But the command of the forts was taken from him and was given to another commander. But the connection of the Pandits with the army did not cease thereby. Shortly after some of them entered the Sikh army, and some entered the Marhatta and other armies.

In the civil administration the Pandits held very high places. Pandit Mahadeo was the Peshkar (Chief Minister) of the Mogul Subedar, Ali Mardan Khan (1650-1657 A.D.) It was during his Peshkarship that the imperial highway from Srinagar to Gujrat was constructed. At every stage a Caravan Serai was constructed and the road itself was made wide and easy to traverse. But the class pride of the Muslim notables was very much wounded by the appointments of Pandits to such high offices. It was quite in the natural order of things that these people should have now taken it upon themselves to inflame the Kashmiri Muslim mass mind against the Pandits. The policy underlying the appointments of Pandits was very easily understood by them and was not hidden from them. The iron hand of the

grand Mogul, however, kept them back from any major communal upheaval. But even then spasmodic communal eruptions did take place. Pandit Mahadeo had one year to deal with famine conditions which on account of the scarcity of crops could not be bettered to the satisfaction of the people. At the instigation of some Muslim notables headed by Khwaja Mam—who had their own axe to grind—a mob of Kashmiri Muslims fell upon the house of Pandit Mahadeo, looted it of its valuables, and set fire to State granaries. The news, though slow, did at last travel to Delhi. Shah Jehan was greatly upset by this. The rising against the Pandit was interpreted by him as a rising against himself. Some Kashmiri notables were summoned to the royal court, to explain circumstances that led to the attack on Mahadeo's house. Headed by Mulla Yusuf Kavasa they reached Delhi and were in due course ushered into the royal presence. The dialogue between Mulla Yusuf and Shah Jehan shows the serious notice that the latter had taken of the whole affair. Shah Jehan inquired of Yusuf as to who was responsible in his opinion in Mahadeo's case. Mulla Yusuf said; "In my opinion neither Mahadeo nor anybody from the public is responsible." But Shah Jehan did not at all like the trend of the answer and cutting his answer short thundered out: "If none of the parties is at fault, is it then I, who am at fault? I regret why I put this question to a

person so devoid of sense."[1] Hearing this Yusuf fell senseless on the ground. After some time he revived and was shown out of the royal presence. Not standing the disfavour Yusuf died a few days after.

Pandit Mahdeo's episode, though trivial in itself, shows beyond doubt the policy which the Moguls had adopted in Kashmir. They relied more on the Pandit than on their other Kashmiri coreligionists. They raised his prestige and helped him in maintaining his identity as a group. This created a struggle between this class and the Muslim upper class. For long did this struggle remain in a dormant condition. But it did appear in course of time and when it did, it caused harm not only to the Pandits as a class but even to the Mogul rule itself. But for the time being all went well.

Even during the reign of Aurangzeb the Pandits occupied a very high place in the country and Mansabs were granted to them. Chaudhari Mahesh Shankar Das was a Mansabdar, and it appears that he was in possession of fabulous riches. During the Subedarship of Saif Khan (1668-1671 A.D.) he laid an extensive garden on the banks of Dal lake near Nishat Bagh. He constructed a road, a sort of a causeway, which exists even today across the Dal lake over a

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan; see also Fauq

distance of four miles which connected the garden with his residential house at Rainawari. Twelve bridges were constructed at suitable distances on this causeway and on one of them there exists even today an inscription which gives the date of the construction and the name of the person who constructed[1] this road, *i.e.* Chowdhary Mahesh Shankar Das. The garden itself was so beautifully laid that every week the Subedar used to repair to it. Saif Khan was himself a great builder, but so much was the beauty and grandeur of the Chowdhary's garden that Viceroy could not hide his feelings when he used to remark bitterly:—

Chawdhari Mahesh bâg na kard
Dar Dili Saif Khan dâg kard

"Chowdhari Mahesh did not lay a garden. He simply created a scar in the heart of Saif Khan."[2]

There were other Pandits too who laid extensive gardens and orchards. These exist even today and proclaim in mute eloquence the spirit of public service innate in them.

The Governmental policy of the Moguls was strictly political and religion did not play a prominent part in giving it shape.

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1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru; see also Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

Many Rajput Rajas were made the grandees of the Empire who contributed in an equal measure with the Muslim grandees to the consolidation of the Mogul Empire. Instances are not wanting to show that while the Muslim grandees sometimes turned traitors, the Rajput Rajas shed their last drop of blood in defence of the Empire. This by itself is a proof, if proof be needed, to prove the successful working of the Mogul administrative policy.

CHAPTER IX

Pandits after Aurangzeb

WITH the passing of Aurangzeb, the forces of turbulent lawlessness that had found place of safety underground now appeared on the political firmament. Aurangzeb had, even before he ascended the throne, perceived that the external pomp and magnificence of the grand Mogul had succeeded in only hiding the weaknesses which had silently crept into the fabric of the Mogul rule. He wanted to strengthen the rule. This he aimed at by crushing the opposition and giving an indelible Muslim complexion to the administration. While doing so, he alienated all those who were not of his religious persuasion. By this he created an opposition for himself which gathered so much strength in course of time that it did ultimately destroy the Mogul rule for all time. He undertook useless wars in Deccan against Muslim States which stood as a bulwark between him and the rising Marhatta power. The Deccan Muslim States having been removed from the field, Aurangzeb came face to face with the rising Marhatta power. Unlike Akbar, Aurangzeb had lost his faith in the people. At the most he could rely either upon his army or the handful of Muslims who were of his way of thinking. For twenty long years he

remained in Deccan to fight the Marhattas and others. These useless wars exhausted his treasury and weakened his army and threw into prominence a set of people who were difficult to manage and impossible to subdue. The result was that for his sons he left a weak legacy which they could not maintain. The army, though weak, became the sole arbiter and during the reign of the latter Moguls, it was the military leaders who swayed the pendulum backward and forward.

In Kashmir we have already noticed that the policy of the Moguls was not to encourage the local Muslims. But though the feudal Muslims families were crushed, other families had come into prominence who amassed huge wealth by following trade and commerce as their profession. Along with them there arose another class of commercial magnates who had migrated from the neighbouring provinces of the Punjab and Delhi[1]. These were invariably Khatri Hindus. They conducted a brisk business and had a great hand in the export trade. They had established a colony of theirs in Mohalla Gulshan near Hariparbat close to the royal palaces. The high class Pandits had taken their residence at Rainawari which is a suburb of Srinagar close by the

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.

seat of the Government[1], which existed then inside the fort surrounding the Hari-parbat hill. The Pandits were employed in the Government offices. Thus at the close of the rule of Aurangzeb three classes had appeared on the top : Muslim commercial class, Punjabi, Khatri traders and the Pandits. It may be mentioned that the Khatri traders were greatly encouraged by the Mogul rulers and it was under their patronage that they settled in Kashmir. May be that they were encouraged to give a set back to the Kashmiri Muslim commercial enterprise. Whatever may have been the reason, a struggle between the Hindu Khatri commercial class and the Muslim commercial class was inevitable. The Muslim traders had an advantage over the Hindu traders in so far as they had an approach to the Muslim masses whom they could inflame in the name of religion against the "infidel" traders who for no fault of theirs robbed the Muslims of their wealth. The Khatri could rely only on the Government protection. This he go in an abundant measure as long as the Government was strong. The Pandits too had by now become very influential and affluent. They passed their days very peacefully, and the local bureaucracy was mainly manned by them. Their ascendency in

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.

the political field was unrivalled in Kashmir.[1]

Aurangzeb died in the year 1707 A.D. Within 12 years of his death when Mohammad Shah ascended the throne the Government was very much weakened. Many provinces declared their independence, but Kashmir dragged itself on as a Mogul province. Mohammad Shah ascended the throne in the year 1719 A.D. Within a few months of his ascending the throne, the struggle in Kashmir came to a head. Muhatta Khan, whowas perhaps a Kashmiri, wandered in his boyhood outside Kashmir, till he got access to Bahadur Shah who succeeded his father Aurangzeb in 1707 A.D. Muhatta Khan secured a Jagir for himself, but lost it soon after Bahadur Shah's death. Destitute and forlorn he came back to Kashmir in sheer dismay and frustration. On arrival here he saw the Hindus passing their days in great ease and comfort. Trade and commerce had greatly passed into their hands and the administrative business was mostly conducted by them.[2] Muhatta Khan who was credited with a deep knowledge of Islamic laws, somehow or other found fault with the policy followed by the Naib Subedar Mir Ahmad Khan towards the Hindus and made it plain that ascendency of the Hindus was

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
2. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru

intolerable from every point of view.[1] He in pursuance laid a prayer before the Subedar to the following effect:—

(1) No Hindu should ride a horse, nor should a Hindu wear a shoe;
(2) that they should not wear Jama (an article of Mogul dress);
(3) that they should not bear arms;
(4) that they should not visit any garden;
(5) that they should not have Tilak mark on their foreheads;
(6) that their cildren should not receive any education.[2]

The Subedar refused to agree to these proposals. But Muhatta Khan who was of a sterner stuff could not take this lying down and he took the law into his hands. He established his seat in a mosque and there from he issued orders in furtherance of his proposals. He collected a huge following who were deputed to harass and humiliate the Hindus in general. He issued an edict that wherever a Hindu is seen riding a horse he should be pulled down, Tilak mark should be erased from a Hindu's forehead and his turban and shoe should be snatched away. Besides that, orders were

1. History of Kashmir by Khwaja Azam. Azam was an eye-witness to all this.

2. History of Kashmir by Khwaja Azam. See also Hassan and Fauq.

issued that no Hindu should attend any school or visit a garden, nor should he wear decent dress and so on. This was a signal for a general rising and an orgy of loot, plunder and murder was let loose. A Hindu Khatri trader Majlis Rai by name, who was a native of Jullundar and possessed more than a crore of rupees worth property in Kashmir[1] was feeding at the close of a religious ceremony a number of Brahmans in a garden, was attacked there by the followers of Muhatta Khan.[2] The Brahmans ran helter-skelter in all directions and Majlis Rai himself ran into the house of the Subedar Mir Ahmad. Muhatta Khan and his men surrounded the houses of both the Subedar and Majlis Rai. Mir Ahmad Khan somehow or other left his residence and collected a small force to fight Muhatta Khan. But he was soon overpowered and was ousted from his post on the accusation of his being partial to the Hindus. Muhatta Khan himself assumed all powers of the State. Having done so, he ordered a systematic attack upon the Hindu areas. Hundreds of them were killed and maimed and most of them were looted and their houses burnt. Majlis Rai Chopra was killed with great ruthlessness and his property was plundered. The Hindus thus crushed, began to run away in large numbers and hid themselves in

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1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

mountaneous areas. And those who remained behind lived under the humiliating conditions imposed by Muhatta Khan and his band.[1]

The attack upon Majlis Rai is symbolic of the real class basis of the struggle. The general Hindu population was made to suffer because they shared with him his religion, though not his wealth. But the general Muslim masses did not participate in this orgy in any large numbers. Rather we have it on the authority of a non-Muslim historian that many Muslims gave shelter to a large number of Hindus and kept them concealed in their houses till better times dawned.[2] This by itself is indicative of the fact that the struggle was merely at the top and the masses were dragged into it by exploiting their religious sentiments only.

Muhatta Khan continued to be in the saddle. Mir Ahmad Khan left the country and was succeeded by Abdulla Khan. But he too could not suppress the rising and Muhatta Khan took possession of the State treasury. Another Subedar by name Momin Khan arrived in the meanwhile. The struggle now entered another phase. The two sons of Muhatta Khan were killed at the instigation of Abdullah—a local Rais. But as ill luck would have it, some of the parti-

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

cipants in the murder were Shias. The Shias themselves were a hated class because the Shawl manufacture was in their hands, and the factory workers were mostly Sunni Muslims. A Shia Sunni riot also occurred which brought untold miseries upon the former.[1] This was followed by the murder of Muhatta Khan himself, when Momin Khan arrived in the country. Even then Momin found himself unable to cope with the forces of disorder rampant in the country. As a stroke of policy he recognized the son of Muhatta Khan by name Sharaf-uddin as successor to his father in the exalted office of Sheikh-ul-Islam. The son improved upon the methods of his father and inflicted various kinds of tortures mental and physical upon the Hindus. He did not spare even those Muslims who had in any way sympathised with the Hindus.[2] Momin Khan also failed to establish order and had to make room for Abdul Samad Khan. The new Subedar came with a strong force, captured Sharaf and put him to death along with his fifty confederates who were hanged publicly. The orders against the Hindus were withdrawn and it was after an agonising period of a number of years that the Hindus were permitted to use a turban, to put on good clothes, to wear the Tilak and to send their children to schools

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

and to perform their religious ceremonies.

During the period the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits was miserable beyond measure. Their houses were burnt and property looted. Many were killed and the conditions that were imposed upon those who lived were worse than death. But the Pandits had an invincible faith in themselves and continued to drag on their existence though miserably, in wait for better times. And better times did at last come. Abdus Samad Khan having established order in the country betook himself in all seriousness towards the task of rehabilitating the Pandits. Sufficient relief measures were adopted and unbounded benevolence was shown to them by the State. Again they came to be associated with the administration of the country. During the Subedarship of Abu Barkat Khan who succeeded Abdus Samad, the Pandits regained their former prestige and power. Abu Barkat Khan condoned even the serious mistakes of the Pandits and appointed one of them by name Mukund Ram Khar as his Peshkar.[1] All the powers of the State were vested in the Peshkar who wielded them with great skill and consideration. Abu Barkat Khan was very popular with the Pandits and it was through their propaganda and similar kind offices that he came to be appointed as Subedar

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

of Kashmir no less than five times.

The Pandits or better known as Kashmiri Pandits had by now risen very high at the Mogul court at Delhi. Important State business was conducted through them. Pandit Jai Ram Bhan held a Mansab. He was the head of the small community of Kashmiri Pandits who were living at Delhi and Agra. For long did he wield enormous influence at the Mogul court. But even there the Pandits had their enemies. On a complaint by Raja Raushan Rai Kamboh before Qamar-ud-Din, Wazir of Emperor Mohammad Shah, the Pandit was incarcerated and his property was confiscated and his sons also were sent to prison. He was later on sent to Muradabad but on the way to that place, he was murdered at the instigation of the Raja. An order was communicated to Inayat Khan, the Subedar at Kashmir, for the confiscation of the property of Pandit Jai Ram. Inayat Ullah Khan had many reasons to be grateful to the Pandits. He sent word to Jai Ram's brothers to conceal whatever they possessed of value before a formal search was made of their houses.[1] The result was that though a search was made of the houses, nothing valuable could be found there.

The closing years of Mohammad Shah's reign, which was greatly weakened by the

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

attack of Nadir Shah witnessed a considerable lawlessness and disorder in Kashmir. The Subedars refused to acknowledge the suzerainty of the Mogul overlord. There were insurrections and wars which reduced the people to the lowest ebb of penury. Trade and commerce, art and industry died. Agriculture was abandoned and the people witnessed a huge famine. So many died of hunger and starvation that it became impossible to manage the dead. Srinagar was looted and burnt a number of times. Other towns fared no better. Fields once rich in harvests were lying desolate and beautiful hamlets which studded the country were mere heaps of ruins with no signs of life in them. It was during these unsettled days that Mohammad Shah the Mogul Emperor died in the year 1747 A. D.

CHAPTER X

A Survey of Mogul Rule in Kashmir

THE Mogul rule was essentially a military despotism, but not of the variety one witnessed during the regime of the Delhi Sultans who had preceded the Moguls. The despotism of the Mogul rulers though military in character, was yet very benevolent. They did not remain content with only winning fresh territories or maintaining peace and tranquillity in the realm, but were always solicitous for the welfare of their subjects. Praises have been bestowed upon them for their achievements in the domain of architecture, painting and other fine arts. There are yet others who have admired their liberal out-look and the spirit of religious toleration. But it goes without saying that the greatest achievement of Mogul sovereigns has been to free the Government from the shackles of theocracy. It was they who took to kingship as a profession and never boasted of being the "Protectors of faithful" and so on. They introduced political ideas into their administration and evolved an administrative policy which was strictly political and secular and never theocratic or based upon religion. They remitted Jazia, the imposition of which was amongst other reasons based

upon the fact "that since a non-Muslim cannot, in strict theory be allowed to fight on behalf of the Islamic State, he must pay for the support and upkeep of the army of the faithful who fight for the faith."[1] The Jazia having been remitted, the Hindus in general and the Rajputs in particular were enlisted in the Imperial army. Even during Aurangzeb's reign Jai Singh was in command of the Emperor's Deccan armies. The strict interpretation of canonical doctrines did not in any way prevent the Emperor from following a policy which political considerations dictated. The removal of Jazia put both the Muslim and non-Muslims on par with each other. Hindus were made the grandees of the Empire. The part played by the Rajputs in consolidating the Empire is known to all. In Kashmir as has been noticed in the preceding pages, Pandits too were given commands in the army, though the Pandit's services were utilized for local purposes only.

The Empire was divided into a number of Subas (provinces). Kashmir was one such Suba. Each Suba was placed under a Subedar. The Subedar was the Head of the provincial administration and was responsible for the maintenance of law and order. He was assisted by a Diwan, in charge of financial matters, and a Faujdar. In

1. Studies in Medieval History by D.P. Saran.

Kashmir there used to be a Faujdar at Anantnag,[1] then known as Islamabad.

From ancient Hindu times Kashmir was divided into a number of Parganas (sub-districts) traditionally thirtysix which served as administrative units. Each Pargana was administered by a Parganadar under whom were other petty officers such as Patwaris, Thanedars, Shikdars, Qanungo, Fotedars etc. A Parganadar and his local beareaucracy was responsible for land revenue collections.[2] Land revenue was collected in kind. To begin with the land revenue was fixed at about twenty two lacs of Khirwars of Shali. Later on the produce of the whole country according to Aini Akbari was estimated at sixtyone lacs of Khirwars of Shali, and the land revenue was fixed at one half of the produce. Says Aini Akbari "the system of revenue collection is by appraisement and division of crops. Although one third had been for a long time past the nominal share of the State, more than two shares were actually taken, but through His Majesty's justice it has been reduced to one half. According to the assessment of Qazi Ali the land revenue was fixed at 3073050 kharwars of Shali." In *dams* the land

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.
2. Ibid.

revenue came to 74670000 dams,[1] which would mean that the price of one khirwar of Shali was about 24 dams, *i. e.* ten annas. In Shah Jehan's reign the total revenue (including other taxes and duties) was estimated at Rs. 3750000 and on the death of Aurangzeb it was Rs. 5747734, though previous to this the revenue had shown some decrease.[2]

Agriculture was very well looked after and many improvements were effected in its methods. Irrigation was a special concern of the State. The Karewas or tablelands in which Kashmir abounds, were most of them irrigated and much ingenuity was displayed by their engineers in carrying water to the top of these hillocks.[3] No wonder that the produce of Shali and other food-grains was very rich and abundant. Fruit growing was practised on an extensive scale. The methods of grafting was introduced in Kashmir during this period.[4] Many central Asian fruits were thus introduced in the country; and many gardens were laid in Kashmir during this period. Wherever one may go in Kashmir a Mogul garden in ruins will be there with a grove of chinars to proclaim in mute eloquence the glory of the place

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Kashir by M. D. Sufi.
3. Bernier's Travels.
4. History of Kashmir by Mohammed Din Fauq.

once. The Subedars while following the footsteps of the Emperors vied with each other in laying gardens. During this period seven hundred gardens are estimated to have been laid.[1] The Chinar tree is believed to have been imported during this period.

Akbar selected the site for laying the seat of Government on lands round about the hill of Hari Parbat. A fort was constructed around the hill and a town was founded there which was named as Nagar Nagar. The fort itself was named as Nagar Nagar fort. In constructing the fort a crore and ten lacs of rupees were provided from the royal treasury and besides two hundred master-builders were sent from India. The construction greatly relieved the horrors of a famine which had broken out during those days. The Subedars had their residence inside the fort. The fort had twelve big gates, besides a number of small entrances—the latter led to the gardens laid by various Mogul Subedars. The palaces where the Subedars lived were constructed inside the fort on the northern and the eastern side of the hill. Jehangir himself raised a magnificent palace on the eastern side. So also Ali Mardan Khan a Subedar (1650 A. D. to 1657 A. D.) to its north. Other Subedars raised similar palaces. There was a stream which flowed near the palaces. This was

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

known as Lachhmi Kuhl. This stream catered to the needs of the people who attended Jama Masjid for prayers. On the southern side of the fort there was a gate known then as Delhi Darwaza which exists even now; and is now known to the people as Kathi Darwaza. The Naubat Shahi was located there. The jail was just near it at a place where the present jail is situated. The reason why the gate is now known as Kathi Darwaza is perhaps that the condemned people were hanged there—the word in Kashmir for a scaffold being Kathi.

Moguls in spite of their depotism were not unmindful of public opinion. Various were the methods adopted by them to keep public opinion on their side, one such method was not to allow anybody to go to bed with an empty stomach. Poor houses were started under royal patronage which fed the poor and infirm sections of the people. In Srinagar there was one such poor house located in a building known as Bilor Khana which was constructed just near the royal palaces on the bank of Sudrabal lake. Food was distributed free both morning and evening to anybody who felt its need.[1] On the western side of the fort there was another gate which led to Idgah. At Idgah there stood a mosque and a Chinar grove. In Idgah on the Id day after Nimaz the

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.

Subedar and other Mansabdars participated in a number of games. Horse races and peg driving were practised. Thousands of people enjoyed sight-seeing and really enjoyed Id.[1]

The Subedars and other Mansabdars had quite a jolly time and the people also were happy and peaceful. For the Subedars and other big people drinking water was brought from Gagribal. The sluice at Drugjan was just at the place as it is now.

Kashmir carried a brisk trade with Central Asia and India. It was the centre wherefrom articles of Indian manufacture such as muslins, brocade etc. were transported to Central Asia and China and Central Asian manufactured articles were sent to India. In fact it was a meeting place for traders, from such distant places as Balkh and Bukhara in the north and Delhi and Amritsar from the south.[2] The revenue from customs was estimated at two lacs of rupees,[3] which taking into consideration the fall in the value of the rupee since Mogul times is much more than is the income even at present. Anantnag was the place wherefrom trade was directed with India

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1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.
2. Ibid.
3. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

and Jammu, Bhadrawah, Kishtwar etc.[1] The habit of taking tea which is now universal in Kashmir was imbibed during this period following contacts with Tibetian traders who had themselves taken it up from Chinese.[2]

Many industries flourished in Kashmir during this period, chief of them being carpet and shawl industries. Silkworm was reared and the silk industry was very flourishing. Besides that there were other industries such as paper machie, silver work, copper work, wood work, furs, leather work and paper manufacturing. About paper it is recorded that Kashmir did " fabricate the best writing paper of the East which was formerly an article of extensive traffic, as were its lacquer ware, cutlery and sugars."[3] The shawl industry was at its peak during this period. There were about forty thousand shawl looms working in the country during this period.[4] Shawls found their way in all parts of the world. Merchants and commercial agents from all over Asia were stationed here. The art of shawl making was highly developed and a shawl could very easily pass through a ring. It is recorded that a Sayyid who had come to

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1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
2. Ibid.
3. Forster's Travels. Forster visited Kashmir in 1783 A. D. during Afghan rule.
4. Ibid.

Kashmir in 1796 A. D. carried with himself a shawl given to him as a gift which he later presented to Khedive of Egypt, who on his part presented it to Napoleon. Napoleon handed it over to his wife Josephine, who later introduced it in fashionable Paris societies.[1] Gradually Kashmir shawl secured quite a good market in France, and which continued right up to the day the French were defeated in Franco-German war of 1870 A. D. The collapse of France contributed in a very large extent to the collapse of the industry in Kashmir.

During the Mogul period in Kashmir the shawl weavers do not seem to have been reckoned as a respectable class. May be that they were quite an exploited class. In any case their lot was very far from being enviable. Many pithy sayings concerning them are current even now, and these would describe their plight in an unmistakable manner. Even now whenever circumstances urge somebody to use an inferior stuff, where a better stuff should have been used, the man on inquiry would without a moment's thought retort with an old saying: "*Sin muhima sochal raian muhima Khandawav*" which rendered in English would mean "Famine of vegetables will force you to eat Sauchal (a wild grown vegetable) and dearth of good husbands will compel a woman to choose a shawl weaver."

1. Kashir by M. D. Sufi.

Compared to modern conditions there were too many working hours a day with no respite as becomes clear from many other sayings yet in vogue. But this too is a fact that they eked out a secure living from their profession and never starved, though they seldom were in opulent circumstances.

There was not the baffling problem of unemployment of the present day. The fact that about forty thousand shawl looms were working in the country, would show that besides the forty thousand workers on the looms twice the number must have been dependent on this industry alone. These would include spinners, darners, washers, embroiderers, dyers etc. besides the rich shawl magnates and their staff and servants. The unemployment, in towns it can be easily imagined must have been almost non-existent. The people with even small incomes could have kept starvation at an arm's length. The produce of food grains had gone very high, in as much the price of a Khirwar (two maunds) of Shali was only ten annas, which on account of further increase in the production during Shah Jehan's reign must have gone further down. But this would not lead one to the conclusion that the peasantry was a hard-hit lot. In the first instance the abundance of food produce must naturally have kept them free from its want. Besides this it has to be borne in mind that the value of money at that

time was nearly thirteen times as much as it was at the beginning of the second world war, and the value of the rupee at the beginning of the second world war was four times as it is today.[1] Even though a Khirwar of Shali fetched in those days only eight annas, that would mean in our currency thirty two rupees and eight annas. This compares very favourably with the present day prices. Besides this, the village population as elsewhere in India, had a complete village economy. They had their own carpenter, barber, iron smith, physician, washerman and weaver. These were paid in kind at each harvest in lieu of the services they rendered during the year. Fruit was abundant, which on account of its perishable nature, and want of speedy means of transport was not exported in any large quantities. Unlike these days, fruit was very cheap and people used it as an article of food.

The shawl factories were working at two places near Jama Masjid and Buchhwara at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill. The weavers also had establised their residential colonies at these two places.[2] It is believed that the waters of Dal lake have some special properties needed for washing the yarn and it is therefore that Buchhwara

1. Studies in Medieval Indian History by P. Saran.
2. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.

was chosen for starting factories. Paper manufactories existed at Vicharnag,[1] but the finishing touches were given at Harwan.[2] Namda making was yet another industry. The dealers had established themselves at Baldimar in Srinagar,[3] and did quite a brisk business. It is not possible to know the exact amount of wages drawn by a worker at a factory. In any case it could in no way be less than that of a peon—the lowest in rung in official hierarchy—who was paid those days Rs. 3/8/- a month in India.[4] Judging from the fall in the value of currency, a person with an income of 3/8/- a month then is as good as a person of these days with a monthly income of Rs. 150/-. All this might seem a fiction, but it is strange that all this is a fact.

The State too made a huge income from this all round prosperity. At the close of Akbar's rule the land revenue of the valley was a little more than 24 lacs of rupees. By the end of Aurangzeb's rule, the land revenue may have gone up by an other six lacs. The all told income, including taxes, customs and excise duties was about 57 lacs of rupees during Aurangzeb's rule, which while deducting the land revenue

1. History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Studies in Medieval Indian History by P. Saran.

would leave a balance of about 27 lacs from other sources. The figure of 57 lacs would indeed become a staggering figure if converted into modern currency. No wonder then that the Moguls in Kashmir became responsible for a number of beneficent projects, such as road-building schemes, irrigation schemes, laying of gardens, fruit improvement schemes and so on.

For a period of one hundred fifty years, Kashmir witnessed an era of unprecedented peace. Trade and commerce too were in a floursking condition. Majlis Rai, to whom reference has been made earlier, hailed from Jullundar Duaba[1] and is said to have owned a crore of rupees worth property in cash and kind.[2] He did extensive money lending business and when he fell he had an outstanding of twenty four lacs.[3] He is said to have charged an interest of eight annas per cent.[4] There were other Khatri traders who were equally rich. The lot of the Kashmiri Pandits could in no way be described as unhappy. They had quite a good say in the affairs of administration and their causes were decided by Hindu Judges according to Shastras—one such Judge being Srikantha—a Kashmiri

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
2. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.

Pandit, who on account of his learning was appointed by Jehangir.[1] Deeds were generally written in Sanskrit—not the polished language of scholars, but in a dialect which was an admixture of Sanskrit and Persian. There was a fair measure of religious toleration. Even Aurangzeb granted some lands to the Pandas of Martand Tirtha (Mattan) under his royal seal. The Pandas of Mattan have preserved this Sanad. There were many religious festivals celebrated then by the Pandits which have now fallen in disuse. And so were many Tirthas which the Hindus visited year after year. Some of them are not even known now.

But from this it should not be supposed that there was not a single Subedar who misbehaved at times. Such instances of misbehaviour are many. But the moment information reached the Ruler at Delhi, prompt measures were adopted to set the matter right. The Pandits made a complaint to Jehangir against Qilich Khan—a Subedar during his reign. Jehangir at once wrote to the Subedar. "Supporter of Government. Thy complainants are many and thanks-givers few. Pour cold water on thirsty people or else relinquish thy post."[2]

1. Dabistan.
2. Kashir by M. D. Sufi.

CHAPTER XI

Afghans appear on the Scene

CONSEQUENT upon the murder of Nadir Shah at the hands of his own followers in the year 1747 A. D. Ahmad Shah Abdali seized his vast dominions and installed himself upon the throne left vacant by his death. Such an incident as Abdali coming to power could not pass unnoticed in Kashmir. The policy of the Moguls towards the Kashmiri Muslims was not at all favourable to them. Very few Kashmiri Muslims were ever given a Mansab, and the portals of the military service were closed on them. But in spite of this a rich class of industrialists dealing in shawls and other similar articles had come into existence amongst them. The rise of this class contributed largely to the weakening of the Mogul rule in Kashmir. This class had harboured a rancour against their Mogul rulers which was further augmented by the partiality which the latter had shown for the Kashmiri Pandits. Now that the Mogul rule was on its last legs, the rise of Abdali created new hopes in the minds of these Kashmiri Muslims notables. Some amongst them wrote a letter to Abdali inviting him to depute a Subedar for Kashmir with this assurance on their part that the country along with

its Mogul Subedar, Afrasiab Beg Khan would be handed over to him without any bloodshed. By chance this letter fell in the hands of Afrasiab Beg Khan, who thinking it inopportune to take any drastic measures agaist the offenders, merely produced it before them in an open Durbar with the hope that such a generous gesture on his part might prevent them from further mischief. But this yielded no beneficial results and fresh conspiracies came to be hatched up. The result was an Afghan incursion. After meeting with some preliminary successes the tide turned against the Afghans, and they met with a complete discomfiture and were forced to beat an ignominous retreat from the country. This incident took place in the year 1748 A. D. the year Mohammad Shah died. Mohammad Shah was succeeded by Ahmad Shah, in whose reign Kashmir permanently passed out of the Mogul suzerainty and came into the possession of the Afghan king Ahmad Shah Abdali, although for a period of five years more it lingered on as a part of the tottering Empire of the Moguls. Ala Kuli Khan was the last Mogul Subedar of Kashmir. He took charge of his office in the year 1752 A. D. and appointed Mir Muqim Kanth—a Mogul by race and a Kashmir by domicile, who later on played a prominent part in the history of Kashmir as his representative (Naib Qaim Muqam). The term of Afrasiab Beg's office was very troublous for Kashmir. Civil war, famine

and flood had wrought havoc upon the country. Mir Muqim set himself in right earnest upon the task of giving a substantial measure of relief to the people. Besides this he introduced a number of wholesome reforms in the administration of the country and effected reduction in the pay of the army and disbanded a large number of soldiers whose maintenance was an unnecessary burden on the already famished treasury. But this action of his served only in reviving the smouldering embers of tension which was inherent in the prevailing conditions. Abul Qasim, the son of Abu Barkat, a former Mogul Subedar was in Kashmir. He found time propitious for striking a blow upon Mir Muqim whose phenomenal rise was more than he could tolerate. He came out of his retirement and collected all the discontented soldiers under him and raised the banner of rebellion. Deputing his brother, Nuruddin Khan with a considerable force from the side of Nawa Kadal[1] he himself took a different route and made a well planned attack upon the house of Mir Muqim at Zaldragar and set it on fire after looting all the valuables found there. Mir Muqim was after this forced to fly for his life to his Jagir at Khuihama and there he stayed waiting for a suitable opportunity. A few more minor skirmishes decided the fate of the country. The Mogul

1. 6th Bridge on the river Jehlum in Sringar city.

rule came to an end and Abul Qasim became the ·ruler of the country.

Abul Qasim was not destined to enjoy a peaceful rule, which as it was did not last longer than three months. In the meantime Abdali reached Lahore. Mir Muqim who was biding his time at Khuihama, a village held in fief by him, now joined his hands with Khwaja Dedamari another Kashmiri and together they sent a prayer to Abdali to effect the conquest of Kashmir. Abdali was only too glad to oblige the two Kashmiri notables and deputed Abdulla Aishak Aqasi with a considerable force for the conquest of Kashmir. Abul Qasim too made elaborate preparations to meet his formidable adversary. The two armies met at Gund Niamat, a village near Srinagar. The battle raged for fifteen days. Tremendous efforts were made by Abul Qasim to turn the tide against Aqasi and was on the verge of success when the commander of his forces Gul Khan Khaibri played false to him and joined the other side. This decided the fate of the battle which was so vigorously fought and treacherously lost. Abdul Qasim fell into the hands of the enemy and Aqasi made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar and laid the foundation of the Afghan rule, though it took some more years before the Afghans were firmly established in the country. But for the time being devastation was let loose

on the country.

Aishak Aqasi did not stay in Kashmir for more than six months, but even during this short period he made the ruin of the country complete and left no stone unturned in giving the people a correct idea of what the future would be like. The houses of the rich and poor alike, were plundered. Huge fines were imposed upon the people. Their property was pillaged without mercy and those people who incurred his displeasure were murdered most brutally. The panic that he struck in men's minds was so great that many people found solace in committing suicide. Mir Muqim whose political career had begun with very great promise lost completely his former self and fully identified himself with the brutal activities of Aishak Aqasi. He proved a real engine of oppression for the whole country, and by means as have been described above he helped Aqasi in collecting a crore of rupees from the poor and already famished people of Kashmir. For the Kashmiri Pandits Mir Muqim became a terror and many Kashmiri Pandits left their native land in despair. A popular verse of those days may well describe the plight of the Kashmiri Pandits.

Ah dil hama Khaufo Khatr ast Darin shahr
Kun Azmi safar fitna Muqim ast darin shahr.

O Heart! Both fear and danger are

rampant in the city
Prepare for journey "disorder" is stationed (Muqim) in the city.

The Kashmiri Mohammedans themselves were tyrannised beyond all measure and their pent up feelings found articulation in the verses of Mulla Ahmad who painfully depicts the picture in the following lines:

Shud nai nagma kuchai faryad
Harfi Afghan chu darmian uftad
Shori Afghan chu bishnavem beqail
Yadam amad zi suri Israfil
Shori mahshar dayari Afghan ast
Bas ki pur shor kari Afghan ast
Nagaha chu balai damangir
Shah Aqasi rasid dar Kashmir.

"Sweet music of the flute has got itself changed into mournful notes as soon as the Afghan made his appearance on the scene.

The uproarious Afghan with his dreadful voice makes one feel the terrible panic of the resurrection day.
Whatever the Afghan does brings before one's eyes the dreadful picture of the resurrection day with all its din and and bustle.
Suddenly a calamity overtook the country, the moment Aishak Aqasi set his foot in Kashmir."

Having stayed in Kashmir for a period of about six months, Aishak Aqasi left for Kabul leaving behind him Abdulla Khan Kabuli to carry on the administration of the country. Abdulla Khan, however, was not destined to occupy long the exalted office to which he was appointed by Aqasi. The people were tyrannised beyond measure by Aqasi and they could expect nothing better from his nominee. The rule of the Afghans too was not fully established in the country by then. Soon after a conspiracy was hatched up by Sukh Jiwan Mal and Abul Hassan Bandey as a result of which Abdulla Khan was murdered. Fully disgusted as the people had become with the methods used by Aqasi, not even a faint voice was raised by them against Abdulla Khan's murder. The removal of Abdulla Khan from the field of action allowed a breathing space for the people of Kashmir, and so bitter was the memory of the past few months that they gladly received the news of Raja Sukh Jiwan himself having assumed the reins of the office of the Administrator of the country. This event took place in the year 1754 A. D.

CHAPTER XII

Sukh Jiwan's Meteoric Career.

SUKH JIWAN a native of Gujrat was serving in the Army of Ahmad Shah Abdali when he was deputed to serve under Aqasi in his Kashmir campaign.[1] Aqasi appointed him as Sahibkar to Abdulla Khan Kabuli. But, as already stated, Sukh Jiwan soon after assumed the reins of the office of the Subedarship and appointed Abul Hassan Bandey[2] as his Prime Minister. For some time Sukh Jiwan carried on Government in the name of Abdali. Ahmad Shah Abdali too did not deem it expedient to take any serious action against Sukh Jiwan and even issued an appointment order to him. For some time the affairs were carried on smoothly when Abdali made a peremptory demand for a huge sum of money, over and above the annual tribute. Sukh Jiwan could ill afford to fulfil this demand. The people of Kashmir were already impoverished beyond measure, and any further burden on them would have meant the complete ruination of the country. The result was that Sukh Jiwan refused to comply with this order. This left him no other alterna-

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

tive but to declare his independence which he did. After this Sukh Jiwan set himself in right earnest in giving relief to the people, and the first step that he took in this direction was to establish a strong Government. He strengthened the frontiers and made it penal for the frontier people to allow any Pathan to cross the frontier.[1] Besides this he organised the army on a sound footing, and imported Sikhs and Sansis from the Punjab and enlisted them in his army.[2] Troops were also raised from the Frontier Muslim tribes. A terrible famine occured in Kashmir during these very days. Various measures were adopted by him to successfully cope with the calamity. He ordered a census of the whole population of Srınagar and on this basis he issued ration slips to the people. The names of the inmates of a household were noted on the Ration Slips and these were issued to the head of the household. The rations were supplied to the people from State granaries at the rate of one anna a seer. To the peasantry he made a Taqavi grant of a lac of kharwars of paddy for seeds.[3] He after all, succeeded in establishing a settled and a humane Government which

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
3. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
Kharwar is equivalent to two maunds and three seers.

stood in such a glaring contrast to the chaotic conditions which prevailed before him, that the people without any distinction of creed or caste gathered under his banner.

The news that Raja Sukh Jiwan had declared his independence, made Abdali furious. Again did he depute Aishaq Aqasi with a considerable force to effect the conquest of Kashmir. Sukh Jiwan also made mighty preparations to meet his formidable foe. A prominent Khukha[1] chief Beera Khan cast his lot on the side of Sukh Jiwan. Aishaq Aqasi elated with his former success, started a whirl-wind compaign, unmindful of consequences. But at Hyderabad, a village near Srinagar, he was offered a stout resistance by Sukh Jiwan. The battle lasted some time, resulting in a complete discomfiture for the Afghans. Aqasi fled from the field, leaving behind him a number of his soldiers either dead or prisoners in the hands of Sukh Jiwan. Sukh Jiwan returned to Srinagar, an independant and a victorious ruler and was given a right royal reception by the people.

But all was not to go well with Kashmir. Mir Muqim who was all these years biding time at Kabul having learnt of the Afghan discomfiture at the hands

1. The Khukhas are living on the left bank of river Jhelum below Baramulla.

of Sukh Jiwan, thought it useless to wait any longer at Kabul, and started for Kashmir. On arrival there, he found his former power and influence gone, to regain which he could trust in nothing better than his favourite weapon of intrigue. In a short while he succeeded in bringing about a rupture in the harmonious relations that existed till then between Sukh Jiwan and his Prime Minister Abul Hassan Bandey. The result was that Abul Hassan was sent to prison and Mir Muqim was appointed in his stead in the year 1757 A. D. But Mir Muqim could not maintain his position for more than a year. His intrigue came to the light of the day with the result that he was himself sent to prison. Abul Hassan again came to power, but this time his career was quite short lived. Sukh Jiwan had gone out on a military campaign towards Sialkot, but in his absence the Bomba tribes rose in rebellion. Abul Hassan who was in charge of affairs in his absence, failed to suppress the rising. Sukh Jiwan hurried back from his Sialkot campaign and having suppressed the rising dispensed with the services of Abul Hassan who was suspected of treachery, not without good reason. Mir Muqim again succeeded in getting his former appointment. In the meantime Mir Khan Khuka raised the standard of revolt and Sukh Jiwan went in person to quell down the rising. Abul Hassan Bandey, chafing under the wrong

which he perhaps believed was done to him unmeritingly, took advantage of Sukh Jiwan's absence and rose in rebellion. Having destroyed all the bridges of the Srinagar city, he drew all the boats to his side and waited for Sukh Jiwan. It did not take much time for Sukh Jiwan to suppress the rising, but the happenings of the past one or two years, left him no other alternative but that of chalking out a new policy for future. Ever since Mir Muqim's return the whole country had become a hotbed of intrigue and the whole politics of the country had resolved itself into a continuous game of seesaw between the two rival Muslim courtiers. He decided to put a stop to this game, and in pursuance thereof he ousted both Mir Muqim and Abul Hassan from all positions of power and made his choice from the Kashmiri Pandits and appointed Pandit Mahanand Dar, a Kashmiri Pandit notable, as his Prime Minister.

Pandit Mahanand Dar was a person of great tact and resourcefulness, and fully justified the choice which his master made in appointing him as Prime Minister. The intriguers having been made powerless for the time being, there ensued a lull in the war storms that had broken with so much frequency in the near past, and with the assistance of the Pandit, Sukh Jiwan betook himself to the task of setting right his administration. Various measures were adop-

ted for the betterment of the lot of the peasantry. Many beneficent projects of a public utility were undertaken. Learning was greatly patronised. Poetry was encouraged. Sukh Jiwan who himself wrote exquisite poetry took a lively interest in poetical symposiums. All this bespeaks an era of peace which again seemed to dawn upon the country, after Sukh Jiwan had utilised the co-operation of his Pandit Prime Minister. Some Muslim historians accuse Pandit Mahanand Dar of inimical tendencies towards the Muslims and in their support they state that it was at his suggestion that cow-killing was made an offence by Sukh Jiwan[1]. But inspite of what the later day historians may have to say, the popularity of Pandit Mahanand Dar with the Muslims was certainly at a very high level. He had adopted measures of a most beneficent character for the amelioration of the lot of the masses. This could not but make him rise in the people's estimation and his popularity with the Muslims can be gauged from the following Persian verses that were addressed by a contemporary poet, Mohammad Jan Beg to Sukh Jiwan, in which reference is made to the Pandit in most glowing terms:

Kar Pardazi tu Mahanand ast
Anki hast az qabilai Dar ha

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

Me numai banami o tankha
Naqd o jins o barat u chakar ha
Guft dar babi justane rozi
Saadi agah az mukkadar ha
Rizik har chand be guman birasad
Sharti aql ast justan az Dar ha

"Mahanand, who comes from the clan of the Dars is your Chief Minister; you have rightly made him master of all cash, kind and administration, Saadi who is well versed in reading the mysterious working of the decrees of Fate, has said, that God certainly gives bread to all, but the condition that one has to fulfil is that he must possess wisdom, and then seek it from Dars."

Even after Sukh Jiwan's fall both Pandit Mahanand Dar and his cousin Pandit Kailas Dar maintained their former position of prestige and power. This could never have been possible if their actions were characterised by a spirit of bigotry. That would have naturally made them lose the support of masses which they had gained in the past, and but for which they would have sunken into oblivion with no claims on history to mention their achievements.

But the independent rule of Sukh Jiwan assisted by a Pandit Prime Minister was more than the powerful Muslim upper

classes could tolerate. So when they found all their former prestige and power gone, they could not be expected to sit idle. Fresh conspiracies were hatched up by them, and this time they succeeded in making a tool of a Balkhi prince who having been expelled from his own country, was enjoying the hospitality of Sukh Jiwan for a number of years. The prince made a most cowardly attack upon the person of the Raja and wounded him seriously. He no doubt paid the price of the dastardly outrage with his life, but naturally enough this brought in its train a general disorder. The opportunity was at once seized by the conspirators who again extended an invitation to Abdali. Nur-ud-Din Khan Bamezai, a veteran General in the army of Abdali, was deputed this time to effect the conquest of Kashmir. Sukh Jiwan also made mighty preparation to meet him and waited for him near Cheraudar on Tosa Maidan side. But just when the battle was on, the Commander of his forces Bakhat Mal,[1] a Hindu, joined the other side. This disheartened the Raja. He left the field, but was soon caught while running away. His eyes were taken out and was later imprisoned.

Sukh Jiwan was a brave man with a rare capacity for organisation. Judging from

1. Anand Ram Pahalwan in his History of Kashmir calls him Qandahari Mal.

the standard of the times, his methods were both humane and just. His name is even now a household word in Kashmir, where good old people are seen making reference in their daily parlance to "Waqti Sukhju" meaning thereby "the good old days of Sukh Jiwan." His reign came to an end in the year 1762 A. D. Henceforth the real Afghan Rule begins in Kashmir.

CHAPTER XIII

Kailas Dar comes to power.

AFTER the defeat of Raja Sukh Jiwan, Nuruddin Khan set himself upon the task of establishing peace in the country. The leadership of the Pandits was in the hands of Pandit Kailas Dar whose statesmanship and skill for organisation was of a very high order. He made Pandits a force, with the result that the prospective candidates for Subedarship began seeking their help. Bland Khan Sadozai, one of the candidates opened negotiations with the Pandits and succeeded in winning their support. Pandit Kailas Dar who wielded a lot of influence even with the Durrani overlord succeeded at last in getting Bland Khan appointed as Subedar of Kashmir in 1762 A. D.[1] Under these circumstances it was but natural for Kailas Dar to add greatly to his prestige and it is said that he amassed a lot of wealth.[2]

Bland Khan had a smooth sailing in Kashmir but one episode that happened at the close of his reign disturbed the other wise calm atmosphere that had prevailed

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
2. Ibid.

till then. On an altercation with a few Shias, a huge Muslim mob fell upon Jaribal,[1] and indulged freely in an orgy of loot and plunder, arson and murder. On inquiry, the Subedar, who was a Sunni, found the Shias guilty and awarded "suitable" penalties to them such as the cutting of their noses, ears, etc.

Bland Khan Sadozai did not remain long in Kashmir and was succeeded by Nuruddin Khan Bamezai in the year 1764 A. D. By this time the Afghan rule had become well established in the country. But it seems that the Afghans had well profited from the experience of Sukh Jiwan and therefore did not place an undivided trust in the intriguers of a former regime. It has been stated by Mr. George Campbell[2] that "the valley never belonged to the Afghan nation but was retained as a crown appanage of the kings who were very jealous of admitting into it subjects whom they might find it difficult to turn out again and much preferred to govern with the Pandits." Nur-ud-din Khan after the assumption of his office set upon the task of choosing his Madarulmiham and Sahibkar. Mir Muqim to whom reference has so far been made more than once, had a rare capacity for intrigue and wielded also an

1. This is the main Shia locality in Srinagar.
2. Ethnology of India.

influence in the country which could not be ignored by even the Subedar. But with all this, the Subedar could not place an undivided trust in him. The result was that while he appointed him as his Madarulmiham (Chief Minister) his choice for the appointment of Sahibkar fell upon Pandit Kailas Dar.[1] The appointment of Pandit Kailas Dar to the post of Sahibkar, which was as responsible a post as that of Madarulmiham did not find favour with Mir Muqim. Kailas Dar was once in the personal service of the Kanths.[2] Mir Muqim took it as an insult for himself that the leader of the rival group should become his colleague with equal powers. But then he kept silent over it, and the embers of dormant enmity between the two notables kept on smouldering for some time, when a quarrel ensued between Kailas Dar and a distant cousin of his, Chatur Pandit Dar[3], over the distribution of their family Jagirs that were once confiscated and later on released. Mir Muqim thought that the time was ripe for striking the Pandit. He sided with Chatur Pandit and even succeeded in releasing half the Jagirs in favour of Chatur Pandit. During those very days one evening Kawal Pandit who was a son of Chatur Pandit was coming back from the house of

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. Ibid.
3. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

Nuruddin Khan at Nawab Bazar in company with Mir Wali a nephew of Mir Muqim Kanth. When these gentlemen reached Nawa Kadal some persons jumped upon them from behind and murdered both of them, then and there.[1] Naturally enough the suspicion fell upon Pandit Kailas Dar and his cousin Pandit Mahanand Dar. Either for want of proof or because of their great influence no attempts were made in any way to have them brought to book. But the enmity between the two increased day by day with the result that impediments began being placed by Mir Muqim in the smooth working of the departments incharge of Kailas Dar. The Pandit was responsible for revenue collections which were till then done twice a year. But Mir Muqim secured some how an order from the Subedar which provided that collection of land revenue should be made monthly. Although Kailas Dar had to face many difficulties under this arrangement yet somehow or other he pulled on for some time when by dint of a subsequent order, he was required to make daily collections.[2] This order was unworkable in practice and greatly detrimental to the smooth working of revenue administration. By such means Mir Muqim tried to bring about the failure of Pandit's administration, Their enmity went on in-

1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

creasing daily when nature came, at last for the time being to the rescue of the Pandit. Mir Muqim met with his death in circumstances, rather strange. Nuruddin Khan took fancy to a handsome Kashmiri girl and put her in his *harem.* This action of his created a great resentment in the minds of the people. They in a body went to Mir Muqim's house and asked him to intercede in their behalf with Nuruddin Khan and get the girl set free. Nuruddin Khan had expected Mir Muqim to side with him, but he became greatly resentful to find that Mir Muqim not only sided with the people, but even fanned the flames of agitation. The best way to put an end to this agitation he thought was to put an end to Mir Muqim himself. This he manoeuvred in such a clever manner that not only was Mir Muqim killed, but the suspicion of this dastardly act fell upon Kailas Dar. Kailas Dar was got involved in this affair to cloud the original issue, and to prepare the two communities to fight againt each other. In this he succeeded amazingly well. People forgot all about the abduction of the girl and in its stead the talk of the day became the murder of Mir Muqim. The matter did not stop here. This incident served as a spark to bring about a conflagration of dire calamities for the Kashmiri Pandits in no distant future. But for the time being all went well with them. Hakim Mir a Qanungo of Khuihama (the Jagir of Mir

Muqim) who had a long standing grievance against Mir Muqim was called by Nuruddin Khan. Nuruddin conspired with him to murder Mir Muqim. It was settled that Hakim Mir would enter the house of Mir Muqim during night and shoot him dead. Nuruddin gave him a Tapancha (a small rifle)with Kailas Dar's name inscribed on it and impressed on him to leave the Tapancha there after he had shot him. Mir Muqim was murdered in the proposed manner, and next morning when people saw a Tapancha lying there with Kailas Dar's name inscribed on it, they all suspected Kailas Dar as the perpetrator of this foul deed.[1] Mir Fazil Kanth, the son of Mir Muqim who was then at Poonch came hurriedly to Srinagar and laid a complaint before Nuruddin against Kailas Dar as the suspected murderer of his father. Nuruddin Khan did not take any serious notice of the complaint, but in order to ward off suspicion from himself he pretended to express his displeasure by imprisoning Mahanand Dar and a few others.[1]

Note :

Hassan a Kashmiri historian, who wrote his history of Kashmir about eighty years back, gives a different version of the whole affair. But he does not seem to have probed the facts deeper and appears to have been swayed more by the prevailing public sentiment of the times. He says

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

that the "enmity between the Pandit and Mir Muqim Kanth having gone increasing daily Kailas Dar made preparation in right earnest to make short work of Mir Muqim, and thus remove all obstacles from his path. He summoned a person by name Hakim Mir who was a Qanungo of Khuihama, and conspired with him to murder the troublesome Kanth. It was arranged that Hakim Mir would find entrance into the house of Mir Muqim during night and shoot him there. Kailas Dar gave him his own Tapancha on which his own name was inscribed One night Hakim Mir entered the house of Mir Mukim and shot him dead, but feeling nervous the Tapancha dropped from his hands. Next morning when a Tapancha with Kailas Dar's name inscribed on it was found there the public belief was that Kailas Dar was a party to this dastardly outrage." But this version cannot stand the test of close reasoning. In the first instance Birbar Kachru is undoubtedly an older historian and has written his history soon after the occurrence. Naturally enough he is expected to know facts much better than a historian who wrote his account after more than a century. Secondly it could hardly be expected of an astute Pandit like Kailas Dar to give his own Tapancha to Hakim Mir and that too with his own name inscribed on it and thus create proofs against himself. Thirdly it can never be believed that the Subedar would have allowed Kailas Dar to go scot free, if he had believed in the guilt of the Pandit. Mir Muqim was in no way less influential than the Pandit and there was no love lost between the Subedar and the Pandit. It hardly stands to reason that no action would have been taken against the Pandit, if it were seriously believed by the Subedar that he was the murderer of Mir Muqim. Fourthly, in no age or country have murderers been looked

at with favour. If the belief in his guilt had persisted in the public mind, the Pandit would have fallen in the estimation of the people and his subsequent rise would not have been possible. But anyhow the belief in the minds of the Kanths in his guilt remained ever so fresh, and it is from this that the later day historians have taken their clue.

Meanwhile, Pandits Kailas Dar and Babu Ram Dar left Kashmir and went to see Abdali who had then come to Lahore.[1] Mir Fazil Kanth was far from satisfied with the action taken by the Subedar and left Kashmir in disgust. After having failed to get help from Poonch he went to Muzaffarabad and stayed there brooding over the wrong which he believed was done to him by Kailas Dar.

As stated above, Kailas Dar and Babu Ram Pandit who had gone to meet Abdali at Lahore apprised him of what was taking place at Kashmir, how mismanagement was rampant in every branch of administration and how even the Subedar became party to mean intrigues. As a result Nuruddin Khan was summoned by Abdali to Lahore. In pursuance of this Nuruddin Khan left Kashmir in the year 1765 A. D. leaving his nephew Jan Mohammad Khan to carry on the administration of the country.

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

CHAPTER XIV

Kailas Dar and Conquest of Kashmir.

AFTER Nuruddin Khan had left, disorder again set in the country. Lal Mohammad Khan, a Jagirdar of Beru[1] (where he had built a strong fort) and a trusted servant of Nuruddin Khan turned traitor and having defeated Jan Mohammad, became himself the ruler of the country. His rule, however, did not last longer than six months, but even during these six months, he took all possible measures in dealing out a terrible blow to the Kashmiri Pandits whom he nearly wiped out of existence. After Kailas Dar had gone out of Kashmir, the Pandits were left without a leader and disorder began to creep in their ranks. The influence that they had commanded and the power they had gathered in the past waned considerably. But they were generally believed to possess enormous wealth. Lal Mohammad Khan knew that he could not maintain his position without ceaseless fighting. For this he required money which he hoped to force out of the Pandits. The result was that he started a campaign of ruthless oppression against them. Loot, arson, and murder were freely practised upon them,

1. A small town at some distance from Srinagar.

and besides they were made to undergo humiliation in various ways.[1] The Shias too got a sufficient measure of trouble. Lal Mohammad was not destined to remain long in power. Ahmad Shah Abdali was apprised of the news about Lal Mohammad's rebellion, while at Lahore. He appointed Khurram Khan to the Governorship of Kashmir. Pandit Kailas Dar who also had gone to Lahore to meet Abdali was appointed as his Sahibkar. Both Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar started for Kashmir at the head of a powerful army. Lal Mohammad feeling his position insecure left Srinagar and took refuge in his own fort at Beru. Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar in the year 1766 A. D. and were acclaimed by the populace as saviours from the tyrannies of Lal Mohammad. Pandit Kailas Dar came to be recognised as a great force, and he became all but in name the real ruler of the country, Khurram Khan (though a gentleman) was ease loving and indolent to a degree. He was besides of a whimsical temperament combining with it a superstitious bent of mind. The result was that all powers of the State came to be wielded by Kailas Dar, who in addition to his popularity with the people exercised an enormous influence with Abdali. But yet he had his own enemies. Mir Muqim

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

was dead. But his son Mir Faqirulla Kanth was all these years, planning the destruction of the Pandit, whom he believed to be the murderer of Mir Muqim. With the help of Mohammad Khan a Bomba Chief, he planned an insurrection and took possession of the town of Sopore. Lal Mohammad who was till then unsubdued also joined Faqirulla. Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar also collected some force and started for Sopore to fight Faqirulla.[1] But as already stated Khurram Khan was of a superstitious bent of mind. On reaching Pattan[2], he came across on the road side a flock of sheep and goats. This otherwised harmless incident was interpreted by him as a bad omen. He took into his head that there was nothing but disaster ahead. He turned back from Pattan and not waiting even at Srinagar he took Kailas Dar along with himself and started for Kabul and left the city to the mercy of Mir Faqirulla and his supporters. Having found no body to withstand him, Faqirulla Kanth himself assumed the reins of the country's rule in the year 1767 A. D. He started his rule with an announcement of allegiance towards Abdali, and as a matter of fact he began to rule in his name.

Mir Faqirulla is one of the most

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. A town near Srinag..r.

despicable figures in the history of Kashmir. He was both revengeful and selfish, besides a coward. For his own self aggrandisement he enlisted the support of petty Bomba chieftains, but when the time came for his showing a courageous front he acted like a coward, and fled away from the battlefield, leaving the country at the disposal of his own barbarous supporters. As soon as he took the reins of the Government in his hand, he turned his attention towards the Kashmiri Pandits. In order to avenge the death of his father Mir Muqim which he believed was brought about by Pandit Kailas Dar, he fell upon the Pandit's coreligionists and began to work for their destruction in a well planned manner. The services of a large number of Bombas were enlisted from the neighbouring hilly districts with the sole purpose of teasing, tormenting and tyrannising the Pandits.[1] The Bombas did their job so well that even now people recall with a shudder the atrocities which the Bombas used to perpetrate upon the Pandits. Each morning a number of Bombas entered the Pandit houses. The inmates were humiliated, put under arrest, and thereafter their houses were put on fire.[2] Those who were put under arrest were either put to death or given the option of Islam. By such means about two thousand

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq
2. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

Pandits were forcibly convered to Islam[1]. A large number of Pandits was killed besides.[2] "In short the methods adopted by Mir Faqirulla and his Bomba soldiers in tormenting the Pandits baffle all description", so says Hassan the Muslim historian. The Pandits thus suppressed Faqirulla began to feel himself as invincible. Low people who constantly bore him company added to his vanity by means of base flatteries. He became addicted to excessive drinking and within a short time broke off from his allegiance to Abdali and refused to pay his annual tribute. This affrontry on behalf of Faqirulla could not be taken lying down by Abdali and the result was that Nuruddin Khan Bamezai was deputed a second time for the conquest of Kashmir. With a considerable force Nuruddin Khan reached Kashmir. Faqirulla also made a show of resistance and went out to meet Nuruddin Khan, with a Bomba army. A few skirmishes decided the fate of the battle. Faqirulla finding himself unable to withstand a strong Afghan army turned from the battle field and fled in some direction. His Bomba soldiers having got nothing to do fell back upon the city of Srinagar and plundered it in a leisurely manner, till it was rescued by Nuruddin Khan. This event took place in 1767 A.D.

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1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

Nuruddin Khan started his rule with great promise. He brought all the disturbing factors under control, and established peace with an iron hand. But not long after, he too conceived notions of independence and refused to pay the annual tribute to the Afghan overlord. Mohammad Khan was appointed in his stead as the Subedar of Kashmir, but Nuruddin Khan refused to hand over the charge of administration to him. The complicated turn that the Kashmir affairs were taking became baffling even for a veteran general like Abdali. He sought advice and Pandit Kailas was ready with it. Kailas Dar, as already stated, had accompanied Khurram Khan to Kabul when the latter has shown a white feather even before the battle had begun and was staying on at Kabul during the whole of the period, when the above kaleidoscopic scenes were taking place in Kashmir. Kailas Dar sought an audience with Abdali. He undertook the conquest of Kashmir if sufficient forces were made available to him and further pursuaded Abdali to appoint Khurram Khan as the Governor of Kashmir. The request was acceded to and both Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar started for Kashmir at the head of a huge army.[1] They had hardly reached Peshawar when Nuruddin fled from Kashmir leaving behind himself Lal Mohammad Khan

1. Histories of Kashmir by Fauq and Hassan.

to carry on the administrrtion of the country and to fight Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar as best as he could. Lal Mohammad Khan was nothing more than a marauder pure and simple, and he under the pretext of making collections for war expenses, started looting all the leading merchants and the Pandits in particular.[1] But before any action was fought, he left the field and shut himself in his own fort. Khurram Khan and Kailas Dar made a triumphant entry into the city. This event took place in the year 1770. A. D. Pandit Kailas Dar was now at the height of his glory. His popularity was unbounded. He had proved himself as a liberator of the people from the tyrannies which were inflicted upon them in no distant past. But alas ! the high hopes that the people entertained about their future proved to be a mirage and again the people had to plod their weary way through a desert of mis-rule in which the triumphant entry of Kailas Dar was proved to be a solitary oasis of no permanent value.

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

CHAPTER XV

Murder of Kailas Dar.

KHURRAM KHAN succeeded in installing himself as the Subedar for the second time in the year 1770 A. D. In this his sole supporter, guide and friend, was nobody but Kailas Dar. But Khurram Khan was of a very weak clay. The weakest spot in his character was his opportunism which resulted in his unfaithfulness towards his own loyal friends who counted no sacrifice as too great in furthering his cause. Kailas Dar was one of them. Not only did the Pandit leave his hearth and home and his dear ones behind to bear company to Khurram at such a distant place as Kabul, but also helped him in no small measure in retrieving his lost honour. But how does Khurram Khan repay him the debt of gratitude under which he was placed by the Pandit? Kailas Dar was the rightful claimant for the post of the Prime Minister. He had by his services proved himself fully worthy of Khurram Khan's trst. But on his part Khurram Khan proved himself devoid of that human virtue which demands of a person fidelty to one's loyal friends. Khurram Khan appointed Mir Hassan Kanth as his Peshkar, knowing fully well the enmity that existed between the Kanths and the Pandit.

This greatly impaired the dignity and the prestige of Kailas Dar, but Khurram Khan had to pay a dearer price for his perfidious conduct towards one who did not hesitate to stake all to raise him up from the mire of disgrace to which he had fallen by his own actions. Hassan Kanth was a novice in the art of Government. The result was that disorder again set in the country, which neither the Kanth nor Khurram Khan could cope with. Lal Mohammad Khan was unsubdued and he became a terror for the villages which adjoined his fort. After much shilly-shallying Amir Khan Jawansher who was the head of the army was sent to suppress him but his campaign failed and he returned back without achieving anything. After Jawansher's discomfiture Lal Mohammad was further emboldened and he took his marauding expeditions right into the heart of the city of Srinagar. He looted and laid waste the Parganas of Bangil and Beru. But Amir Khan laid the blame for his discomfiture solely upon the vacillating and weak policy of Khurram Khan and his Peshkar, and submitted a formal complaint before Abdali against both of them. As a result Khurram Khan was deposed and in his stead Amir Khan Jawansher himself was appointed as the Subedar of the province in the year 1771 A. D. Khurram Khan fallen into disgrace, left Kashmir—a care-worn and unhappy person, who thereafter was to be heard no more in history.

Amir Khan Jawansher was an indolent and ease loving person and preferred luxuries of a rich *harem* to devoting himself to the administrative affairs of the country. He appointed Mir Fazil Kanth as his Madar-ul-miham and virtually delegated all the administrative functions to him. Lal Mohammad Khan who was unsubdued again raised the standard of rebellion, and plundered the town of Magam. His brother Saifulla made an attack upon Srinagar and set fire to the magnificent palaces of Sukh Jiwan situate at Zaldragar in Srinagar. After a few skirmishes Lal Mohammad Khan died a natural death and with him died his infructuous rebellion. All opposition gone, Amir Khan reverted back to his luxurious ways of life with a redoubled vigour. He built an artificial island in the Dal Lake and laid a magnificent garden with palatial buildings.[1] He also built a palace and a fort on the banks of Jhelum and named it Sher Ghar[2] after his own name. Besides this he constructed the Amira Kadal bridge.

While Amir Khan was busy with his own affairs, Mir Fazil Kanth also made an unbridled use of the powers that were delegated to him. How could he leave the

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1. Known now as Rupalank.
2. The fort existed till recently. Even now the Secretariat is located there.

Pandits alone? Old scars were revived, and the old quarrel between Mir Muqim and Kailas Dar was to be settled. It has already been stated here that the Kanths were one and all under the impression that Kailas Dar was at the back of Mir Muqim's murder, and all these years the Kanths were one after another projecting and planning the destruction of the Pandit. But the great influence that the Pandit wielded and the vast powers that he possessed, left him unscathed. It were, rather the Kanths who were obliged to remain in exile. But, thanks to the ill-starred and unwise step taken by Khurram Khan, Kailas Dar was flung to the background This greatly impaired the Pandit's prestige and power which afforded a propitious time for Fazal Kanth to wreak his time-worn vengeance. Amir Khan was consulted and he, it appears, gave his fullest consent to the outrageous act that was soon to follow. On the fateful day Kailas Dar was sitting in the Darbar Hall, when he was abruptly accosted by the vindictive Kanth and felled on the floor. The Pandit thus taken by surprise, could offer no resistance and before he could collect himself the Kanth unsheathed his sword and struck him dead then and there.[1] His dead body was cast unceremoniously into the river Jhelum flowing close by.[2] Not content with this, the Kanth

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

ordered a search for the Pandit's house people. But somehow or other they took scent of the impending danger and prepared for a secret flight, "All of them men, women and children including Mahanand Dar who at one time was the Prime Minister of Sukh Jiwan secretly left the country and took refuge in the inaccessible mountain fastnesses of Poonch."[1] Other Pandit notables also left the country and some of them along with Gobind Pandit Dar reached Kabul and stayed there in wait for better times.[2] Thus died Kailas Dar, unsung, unwept and unmourned—a collosal figure in the history of Kashmir who more than once changed the course of its history. The Pandit was a man of great courage, fortitude and resourcefulness. He was a great Persian scholar. Even in the unsettledness that characterised the days he lived in, he found time to lay his offering at the shrine of the Muse.[3] He wrote exquisite Persian verses with real poetic merit about them.

With Kailas Dar dead, and the other Pandit notables living in exile in far off places, the Pandits were reduced to the lowest pitch of humiliation and distress. Without support and disorganised as they

1. History of Kashmir by Anand Ram Pahalwan.
2. Ibid.
3. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

were, a terrible demoralization crept into their ranks and it came to be believed then that their days were numbered. But then it was not destined to be so. Amir Khan sunken into debaucheries of a degraded character took a bride from amongst the Hanji clan living at Nandpura, a village on the banks of Dal Lake. He got himself surrounded by the caste fellows of his wife, who made themselves a terror for all. Disorder became rampant on all fours. The affairs went on in such an unsettled manner, when the news reached Srinagar about the death of Abdali who died in the year 1772 A. D.

CHAPTER XVI

Rise of Pandit Dila Ram.

TAIMUR SHAH, the eldest son of Abdali who was on the occasion of his father's death, the Governor of Kandahar succeeded Abdali to his vast Empire. Taimur Shah continued Amir Khan Jawansher as the Subedar of Kashmir and even bestowed the title of Diler Jung on him—a title which of all people Amir least deserved. Amir Khan also paid his homage to Taimur Shah and made regular payment of the royal tribute for some time. But not long after Amir Khan also somehow conceived the notions of independence and stopped the payment of annual tribute and ceased all connection with Kabul. Amir Khan was of Shia pursuasion and after the declaration of his independence he encouraged the proselytisation of his faith by all fair and foul means, and also started a ruthless persecution of the Sunnies. The news about the revolt of Amir Khan took some time to reach Kabul, but as soon as the Shah was apprised of Amir Khan's revolt, he deputed Karim Dad Khan with a strong army for the conquest of Kashmir. It was not a mighty task to deal with a person of Amir Khan's calibre. The result was that Amir Khan was defeated without great

effort—his supporters having forsaken him at the nick of time. Deserted by his friends and chief supporters, and with none to fall back for succour but the Hanji relations of his ill-fated wife, Amir Khan left the country leaving it to its own care.

The victorious Haji Karim Dad Khan triumphantly entered the city of Srinagar and became the Subedar in the year 1776 A. D. The people of Kashmir, having groaned sufficiently long under the tyrannical yoke of Amir Khan looked upon Haji Karim Dad Khan as a liberator. But in this it did not take them long to be undeceived. The Haji proved himself a worse tyrant than his predecessor. He had a natural aptitude for inventing new and novel methods of torture and generally regaled in the sufferings of others. In this he spared none. Rich and poor, high and low, all were made to drink from the bitter cup of his brutal caprices. Not a day would pass when a fine was not imposed upon some person on the mere suspicion that he was rich enough to pay. And the methods he adopted in realising the fines were no less ingeniously inhuman—infliction of degradation, disgrace and death being the normal methods. Taxes of a fantastic character were imposed upon people. One such tax came to be known as Zari Niaz which was levied upon the Mansabdars and Jagirdars. Zari Ashkhas was the tax imposed upon

the trading classes. Zari Habubat was another sort of tax that was levied upon the Zamindars.[1] These taxes, it may be stated here were in addition to the normal taxation. The strain of taxation fell so heavily upon the zamindars that they had to cut down their fruit bearing trees, sell them in the market as fuel to pay up the taxes.[2] But then there were the Pandits also. How could they be left alone as a class when an orgy of loot and plunder was going on with unbridled lust and licence all round. Karim Dad Khan did not feel himself content with only those hardships which the Pandits had to suffer in common with the rest of the population. Somehow or other they had to be separated from others for receiving an additional dose of repression. Karim Dad Khan indeed adopted an ingenious method in roping them in. The Haji had a person by name Aslam Harkara in his employ whose duty it was to realise taxes from the people. Aslam was a paragon of ruthlessness and judging from his exploits the Haji could not have made a better choice. Even now numerous tales are repeated in Kashmir with horror and disgust about Aslam and his exploits. Karim Dad one day kept Aslam somewhere hidden and gave out that Aslam had been murdered and pretended to believe that the

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Ibid.

Pandits as a class were responsible for his murder, about whom he said that they were at the back of the conspiracy which resulted in Aslam's murder. This was the the signal for the arrest of almost all the Pandit notables, who were all of them placed in close confinement. All amenities of life were denied to them. Not satisfied with this alone, he huddled them up in a close cell, where he made them inhale cowdung smoke which was kept smouldering there for days together.[1] Along with all this, Parkash Pandit Dar, brother of Kailas Dar, who was a prominent Pandit notable was put to death.[2] After all this, it is no wonder if the Pandit notables agreed to secure their freedom on payment of a collective fine of fifty thousand rupees annually. This fine came to be be known as Zari-dud (Smoke money).[3]

From the foregoing it has become abundantly clear that no pains were spared by the Haji in making a veritable desert of the nature's most favoured tract on earth. The result was that trade dwindled immensely, agriculture was neglected, and most people left their country in sheer disgust and settled in other parts of India and those who

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. Anand Ram Pahalwan's supplement to Narain Kaul's history.
3. History of Kashmir by Fauq; see also Hassan.

remained behind dragged their miserable existence more dead than alive. But then a benevolent Providence came to the succour of the people. The evil had now transgressed that limit when according to the accummulated wisdom and experience of ages good comes out invariably of it. There appeared on the political stage of the country a personality who turned a new leaf in the desolate and dreary chapter which was opened by Haji Karim Dad Khan in the history of the country. His name was Pandit Dila Ram, who was appointed as his Sahibkar by Haji Karim Dad Khan. Pandit Dila Ram was a man of a very great calibre, a giant amongst men, who combined in himself all the qualifications which go to make up a successful statesman. And Dila Ram undoubtedly proved himself as one. Firm, resolute, calm and with an abundant store of wit and humour, he held his own for a number of years against a number of unholy cliques, that naturally grow wherever the combat is fought on the plane of selfishness and against superior merit. Forster who came to Kashmir in 1783 A. D. has recorded his apreciation of Dila Ram in the following words:—

> "This person of the Hindu sect possessed a more liberal disposition than is usually found in an Indian though perhaps I am so much biassed by his indulgent treatment that my opinion may be thought partial. But his

deportment seemed uniformly benevolent to all classes of people. With his companions he was affable and good humoured. He was humane to his domestics and he exercised with a reasonable temperance the duties of his office."[1]

For the Kashmiri Pandits, Dila Ram came like an angel with a fresh message of life and for the country his presence brought about its rehabilitation. Thus we see that even in the Haji's regime the Pandit undid most of that mischief which was the creation of Haji himself. And in this he obviously succeeded in winning the consent of the Haji also. In the light of all that is known about the Haji, all this is a great achievement indeed. But then the Pandit proceeded with great caution, knew as he full well, that he had to conduct the affairs with a monster at the helm. Dila Ram, like a true statesman, made a full study of the existing conditions obtaining in the country. He found that the reign of terror that was started by the Haji had killed all the initiative in the people, and the world renowned industries of Kashmir, were well-nigh on the verge of destruction. The famous shawl industry was decaying. The shawl weavers left their profession in sheer disgust, for it paid them

1. Forster's Travels in Kashmir

nothing in return. There was no wealth left in the country and there were no purchasers to buy the articles produced here. And what little income they made out of it that went to the coffers of the Haji in the shape of the exorbitant taxes levied by him. It is no wonder then that the shawl industry came to a standstill. But Dila Ram paid his serious attention to this. He called the shawl weavers together and by dint of various concessions made them resume their work [1]. One of their pressing grievances was that on a single shawl they prepared, they had to pay a tax a number of times. And this was a fact. As long as a shawl remained unsold, any concerned state official could realize its tax as many times as he liked for the simple reason that no receipts were issued. All the prayers and protests of the weavers went in vain. Besides this the tax itself was very exhorbitant. Dila Ram realised this hardship of the weavers. He introduced the method of affixing a *dag* (a stamp mark) on each shawl for which a tax was paid, in token of its payment. This came to be known later on as Dag Shawl, and the concerned department was also called by the same name.[2] Regular accounts were kept

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru. See also History of Kashmir (Gulzari Kashmir) by Diwan Kirpa Ram.
2. The department existed till recently and was abolished in the closing years of Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign.

henceforth and the possibility of undue harrasment of the poor weavers was reduced almost to a nullity. The exorbitance of the tax on shawl weavers did not escape his attention. He reduced the tax to an anna per rupee of the sale price.[1] All this had the desired effect. The shawl weavers freed from the yoke of unbearable taxation and the harrasment of the tax-collectors devoted themselves to their art with great zest and the industry flourished day by day.

Having dealt with the shawl industry Pandit Dila Ram turned his attention towards the general welfare of the people as a whole. The agricultural conditions obtaining in the country had greatly deteriorated. There was no incentive for the peasantry to take to land, groaning as they were under the burden of a heavy taxation. Pandit Dila Ram abolished all those unnecessary taxes that had made the life of the peasantry unbearable. All the taxes such as Zari Niaz, Zari Habubat and Rasadat were abolished.[2] In order to create a zeal in the famished and half starved peasantry the Pandit fixed the share of the Government in the produce of land at one-fourth.[3] Besides this gigantic irrigation schemes were

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1. History of Kashmir by Har Gopal Kaul. See also Birbar Kachru's History.
2. History of Kashmir by Har Gopal Kaul.
3. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru. See also Gulzari Kashmir by Diwan Kirpa Ram.

introduced and worked. The rehabilitation of the country was almost complete and Nature seemed to smile gracefully once again upon the unhappy people of the Happy Valley.

Haji Karim Dad having been freed from the anxieties of his own creation turned his attention towards extending his frontiers. He made an attack upon Iskardu and won a victory there. The news was received with much eclat at Kabul and Taimur Shah bestowed the title of Shuja Ulmulk upon the Haji. Raja Ranjit Deo of Jammu made an attack upon Kashmir during these very days, but he was defeated and repulsed back with great loss. The Kanths, whose propensity for intrigue was unbounded, were suspected of having invited the Raja for the conquest of Kashmir, with the active connivance of certain Bomba and Khokha chieftains. His vendetta against the Kanths was terrible. They were simply exterminated root and branch.[1] A number of them were massacred and many more were flung into jail. At the same time he deputed Tar Qulikhan with a huge army to chastise the Khokha and Bomba chieftains. But he returned back discomfitted. His defeat was ascribed to his inefficiency resulting in his murder.

Thus ended Haji Karim Dad's regime—

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

a Haji in name but a veritable monster in his actions. During the closing years of his rule a devastating earthquake took place in Kashmir to which were added the rigours of a severe cold wave which passed over the whole country. Rivers including the Jhelum and all lakes were frozen and the sufferings of the people were beyond measure. In the year 1783 A. D. the Haji laid down the reigns of his office, and left them in the hands of his son Azad Khan to carry on the administration of the country.

CHAPTER XVII

Dila Ram The Madarulmiham

AZAD KHAN, the new Subedar was after the fullest pattern of his father. He had a spurring urge from within in a greater degree than his father had, that goaded him unceasingly on the path of creating daily fresh troubles and tribulations for his subjects. He always regaled himself at the sufferings of others, and when he had nothing better to do, he at least killed one or two individuals to satisfy his ingrained perversity of mind[1]. By such means he piled the number of dead to his credit by thousands. Forster the European traveller already referred to who visited Kashmir during Azad's regime has described Azad as an "infernal despot". The European has mentioned some facts in support of his description which may be given in his own words. Says he "While he was passing with his Court under one of the wooden bridges of the city, on which a crowd of people had assembled to observe the procession, he levelled his musket at an opening which he saw in pathway and being an expert marksman he shot to death an unfortunate spectator. Soon after his accession to the Government he accused his

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

mother of infidelity to her husband, and in defiance of the glaring absurdity which appeared in the allegation, as well as the anxious entreaties of the woman who had borne him to save her from shame, she was ignominously driven from the palace, and about the same time, on a like frivolous pretence he put one of his wives to death. A film on one of his eyes had baffled the attempts of many operators and being anxious at the want of success, he told the last surgeon who had called in that if the disorder was not remedied within a limited time, allowing but a few days, his belly would be cut open. The man failed in his cure and Azad Khan verified his threat".[1] But then there was the Pandit Peshkar whom even the monster like Azad could not touch. Dila Ram, as already stated, had carved out an abiding place for himself in people's minds. Azad knew this. He not only continued to bestow his favours on him but even raised him to the exalted office of Madarulmiham (the Prime Minister)[2]. In various matters of state Dila Ram wielded an unbounded influence over Azad, but then it was not possible even for the resourceful Pandit to put a check to the orgies of his brutal passions which asserted themslves in spite of the greatest restraint. Soon after succeeding to his father's place, Azad led an

1. Forster's Travels.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

expedition against the neighbouring State of Poonch. He was successful, but tarnished his victory by untold miseries and hardships that he inflicted upon the people there. For full seven days, the town of Poonch was subjected to plunder and arson and then he returned back only after having put Gobind Pandit Dar along with a number of other Pandits to death[1].

Azad Khan after his return from Poonch became greatly elated with his success there, and let loose his brutal passions in an unbridled manner which culiminated in greater hardships for his subjects. Gobind Pandit's murder only whetted his appetite for the Pandits, blood, which he now planned to shed promiscuously. Elaborate plans were laid out for effecting their extermination, but then they proved more than a match for him. They, somehow or other, took scent of the impending trouble, and before any harm could overtake them, most of them including the surviving members of Pandit Kailas Dar's family left Kashmir secretly. "Some of them found their way to Poonch, others went to Kishtwar, Rajauri and Jammu, and many more fled to Hindustan."[2] Obviously all these Pandits were informed by Dila Ram of the impending

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Supplement to Narain Kaul's History by Anand Ram Pahalwan.

peril. But Azad Khan was not a person to be discouraged. There were other Pandit dignitories who could serve his purpose. One such victim he found in the person of Pandit Gulab Joo Dar who was the officer in charge of Kamraj division.[1] This division was held in their charge by the ancestors of Gulab Joo Dar ever since the day when Jehangir had bestowed it upon Meru Pandit in lieu of his meritorious services rendered by him to the Emperor, when he was taken prisoner by Mahabat Khan while coming to Kashmir. But Pandit Gulab Joo who had received timely information of the impending trouble from Dila Ram thought it indiscreet to remain in Kashmir and made secret but effective preparations to leave the country. His own son Pandit Birbar, he left under the protection of his own brother-in-law, Pandit Taba Bhat of Anantnag and his two nephews Sahaj Ram and Mirza Pandit, he consigned to their maternal uncle's care at Safapur. Himself Gulab Joo went to Kishtwar, and took refuge with the Raja there. For full three years Gulab Joo lived as an exile at Kishtwar. At last he opened correspondence with Dila Ram who finding a suitable opportunity, interceded on his behalf with Azad Khan, and secured his permission for Gulab Joo's coming back to Kashmir.[2]

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1. The portion of the valley to the north of Srinagar.
2. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

Azad Khan was a Muslim by religion, but his Muslim coreligionists fared no better than Pandits. So far as the latter were concerned, they had one saving factor, i.e. Dila Ram was the Prime Minister. His presence in the administration as its head, always served a sort of check upon the brutal orgies of Azad. And besides that whenever a plan was hatched by Azad to deal the Pandits a death blow, there was Dila Ram to put them on guard. But there are some people who may find it difficult to defend the co-operation which Dila Ram extended to Azad Khan who was believed by them and rightly too as a veritable scourage on earth created for the tormentation of its otherwise innocent denizens. But then apart from the moral values involved in it, Dila Ram fully justified his action by the practical results he achieved. Would it not have spelled ruin for the country and his community if Dila Ram had allowed an opportunity of at least serving a brake in Azad's brutalities to slip out of his fingers and should he have in its stead become a mute observer of all the troubles that would have otherwise fallen to the lot of the people of Kashmir? Politics cannot be always judged by the standards of saintliness. Dila Ram proved himself a real politician.

Azad Khan was a Muslim, but he was a Muslim by name only. May be that

his conception of religion did not rise higher than his actual doings. But at any rate he proved by his actions that he had no love for religion as understood by the rest of mankind even in his time, nor did he feel any qualms of conscience so as to deter him from his misdeeds. He made himself dreaded by friend and foe alike. His exactions from his subjects were so very terrible that the fruit growers of Kashmir effected such a grafting in their trees which spoiled the taste of the fruits. By this means alone could they save their fruit from falling in Azad's hands. A person devoid of religion, with no pangs of conscience, haughty arrogant and vain as Azad was, it was quite impossible that he could continue his allegiance to the Afghan king for any length of time. The result was that soon after his conquest of the Bomba and Khokha principalities, he proclaimed his independence and took the title of Nadir Shah II. So arrogant had he become that he put two Kashmiri notables, Sher Ali Khan and Khwaja Mohammad Ganai to death for the mere suspicion of loyalty on their part towards the Afghan king. News travelled very slow in those days, and it took some time before the Kabul king came to know of Azad's rebellion. Taimur Shah, the Afghan king, instead of taking any drastic measures, deputed Kifayat Khan to bring him round by peaceful methods. Kifayat Khan who had the gift of a flowery

tongue, made Azad understand the pros and cons of his action and was on the verge of success, when news reached Kashmir that a huge Afghan force had already made its appearance in Kashmir. The negotiations thus having fallen through, Azad Khan also started with a huge army. The two armies met at Muzaffarabad. Azad Khan came out victorious and he returned back with a number of prisoners and a lot of war material. The prisoners were, some of them killed at Maisuma and the rest drowned at Nurbag in river Jhelum. His own assistant Diwan Singh he put to death at Haft Chinar.

But with all this, Azad had his own anxieties, his own cares, although they were the creation of nobody but himself. One would have expected that after his victory over the royal forces, he would have had a smooth sailing, but then his victory added so greatly to his vanity and arrogance that even his most faithful servants turned away from him in sheer disgust. Pahalwan Khan and Maluk Khan, two of his most trusted lieutenants hatched up a conspiracy for his destruction. They succeeded in winning the support of Izmat Khan who was in charge of Azad's bodyguard. One night Izmat Khan, finding a suitable opportunity fired at Azad, but missed the aim. In horror, Azad leapt through the window towards the river Jhelum flowing nearby. He took

a boat and hurried towards Rainawari, where he took shelter in Dila Ram's house. Izmat and his party gave him a hot chase, but he reached his destination in safety. At Rainawari all of them tried to enter Dila Ram's house forcibly but failed. In the melee that ensued, Azad Khan remained unscathed though Dila Ram sustained some minor injuries.[1] The whole night witnessed a number of petty skirmishes between the partisans of Izmat and Azad. Next morning Azad came out of his place of shelter and camped at Maisuma. Pahalwan Khan also came out with his forces, but not feeling himself strong enough to force an action he fell back and took shelter behind the walls of the Sher Garh fort. Azad at once laid siege to the fort. For seven days bombardment proceeded on from both the sides. At last a breach was made in the walls, and the Azad's forces rushed in. In the fight that ensued Pahalwan Khan was killed and with him ended his infructuous rebellion.

But even then Azad was destined to have no rest or respite. Taimur Shah could not sleep over the defeat suffered by his army and thus lose a province like Kashmir. Again did Taimur arrange an expedition to Kashmir and this time it was equipped well and put under the command of a veteran

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

general Madad Khan. Azad's star was now on the wane. By his own arrogance he had lost the co-operation of almost all his trusted servants. Those few who had for one reason or the other kept hanging on around him, finding time propitious joined the other side. But even then his cruelty of temper met with no set-back. Sardar Arsala Khan who had joined Madad Khan, was chosen by him for a terrible vendetta. His two sons and a daughter were drowned in a river and the modesty of his wife was got outraged by his own children. But all this had now only one effect: that of antagonizing further the people against him. A terrible battle was fought in the year 1785 A. D. near Khushi Pura village, which culminated in a victory for Madad Khan. Azad, crest fallen with no friend and forsaken by all ended his inglorious career by ending his life with his own hands and Madad Khan with nobody to oppose him made a triumphant entry into the city of Srinagar in 1785 A. D.

CHAPTER XVIII

Dila Ram wins fresh Laurels.

Dar Tawarikhi yak hazar u dusad
Zulmi "Azad" ra rasid madad.

"In the year one thousand and two hundred, the zulum of Azad received Madad (help)."

IN these poetic words did the public sentiment find articulation, when the bard in his humour of despair composed the above couplet to chronicle the arrival of Madad Khan. Azad had proved himself a terror in the past and the people had lost all hopes in the future. But Madad Khan was of a different frame of mind. He realised that Azad had by dint of his misdeeds greatly lowered the public estimate about the Afghans. He, therefore, decided to turn a new leaf in the dark chapter that was opened by his two predecessors in the history of Kashmir and he set himself in right earnest in applying a healing balm to the lacerated hearts of the people.

Nor did he let the machinations of the mischief-mongers, of whom there was no dearth in the country, go unheeded. He suppressed all those elements with an

iron hand. He also made recommendation for the remission of the taxes that were specifically levied upon the Pandits, but they expressed their willingness to continue payment if only they were left in peace thereby.[1] But with all his good work, Madad Khan was not to remain in Kashmir for more than ten months, when he was called to make room for his successor Mirdad Khan in year 1786 A. D.

Mirdad Khan made a good start with Mulla Gaffar Khan as his Assistant. The Finance Department was put under the charge of Pandit Dila Ram. For some time to come, the affairs went on smoothly. But somehow or other there came about a rupture in the harmonious relations that had hitherto subsisted between the Subedar and his Assistant, Mulla Gaffar Khan. Both of them tried to harm each other and both of them sought the help of Dila Ram.[2] Dila Ram kept himself outside all the rival

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Fauq narrates in his history that Dila Ram taking advantage of the jealousy between the two notables, enlisted Pandits in very large numbers in the Government services and thereby harmed the Muslim interests. But Hassan who wrote his history half a century before Fauq wrote his history does not make even a remote suggestion as regards this. Fauq's comment partakes of the modern trends in Indian politics which enunciate that the interests of a particular community are always unsafe when handled by a person of a different faith.

cliques. This naturally added to his popularity with the masses and greatly enhanced his power and prestige.

The news that the Subedar and his Assistant were not pulling on well with each other, did after all reach Kabul. The Subedar Mirdad Khan undertook the collection and realization of the land revenue without the help of his Assistant, Mulla Gaffar Khan, who was as a result, removed from office and Mirdad Khan was put in the sole charge of the country. One would have expected that now as the dual element in the administration was ended, there would be peaceful days ahead, but even this did not in any way ease the matters.

Dila Ram, as already stated in these pages was a man of extraordinary resourcefulness. In the unsettledness that prevailed during those days, if there was one man who came out unscathed out of the fiery ordeal it was Dila Ram. Azad rebelled against his Afghan overlord. He was made to suffer an ignominous defeat. Afghan rule was again established but Dila Ram did not find his prestige or power diminished even by an iota. This gave rise to a number of enemies for Dila Ram[1] who were impotent for the time being to shake Dila Ram from his position, but nevertheless always

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

planned secretly for his destruction. They waited for an opportune time to strike, which they got after all under circumstances, rather interesting. Hafiz Kamal, a Muslim divine of Srinagar, who was once the chief preacher of the city, was deposed from his office on an accusation of heresy having been brought against him. Having passed a number of years in retirement, he at last came out from his seclusion and started his preachings again. He was again accused of using profane language (Tabarra). This kindled the fire of a religious upheaval and people assembled in their thousands demanding the head of the heretical Kamal. Poor Kamal was made to ride a donkey and was paraded through the streets of Srinagar. He was later beheaded at Haft-Chinar. This incident was closed so for as Kamal was concerned, but it left behind a legacy of religious commotion which even the ignominous death of Kamal did not end. The enemies of Dila Ram could not have chosen a better occasion to bring about his fall. At once an accusation was brought against him as well that he too had used profane language with respect to the Muslim religion.[1] This accusations served as a spark in a powder magazine, and the result was a conflagration of a worse kind. People assembled in the Shah Hamdan mosque and the Jama Masjid. After listening

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1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

to the mischievous harangues of certain persons, in whose breasts lay the enmity against Dila Ram hidden, they closed the doors of both the mosques and went to meet the Pandit.[1] An attack was made upon Dila Ram who was seriously wounded. He would have met with his death, had not the Subedar arrived on spot, and pacified the mob.[2] Mirdad Khan took no notice of the accusation brought against Dila Ram, knowing as he was full well that the agitation against him was artifically engineered. Within a few days the excitement subsided and Dila Ram went on with his work as before.[3]

In these very days, there was some disturbance in Kamraj created by one Mir Jaffar Kanth, but it was soon suppressed. Mirdad Khan, however, was not destined to live long. A short while after he fell ill and breathed his last in the year 1788 A. D. He was succeeded by Mulla Gaffar Khan but he too was recalled back after a period of only four months. Sirdar Jumma Khan Alkozai was appointed to succeed him.

Jumma Khan was a man of humane temperament and more or less justice loving. He patronised learning and was a great

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1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

lover of poetry.[1] He had hardly set his foot in Kashmir when the country was devastated by floods. A number of houses were destroyed and many people were left without a shelter. But Juma Khan coped with the calamity very bravely and rendered relief to the people, as best as he could.

In those days the accounts from Kashmir were periodically submitted to the Kabul Government, and this time Pandit Dila Ram assisted by Mir Jaffar was deputed to present the accounts' statement at Kabul.[2] Dila Ram was already a known figure at Kabul and he was very well received by Taimur Shah, the Kabul king. The king was greatly impressed with the regularity of the accounts maintained under the supervision of Dila Ram. The king took the latter in his favour and took all sorts of liberties with Dila Ram and put a number of questions to him about the Hindu religion. One day Dila Ram was sitting in the Durbar at Kabul, when Taimur Shah rather abruptly inquired of him the reason as to why he had put a Tilak mark on his forehead. Quick came the reply that the mark resembling *alif* was an indication of the fact that God was one without a second. The king,

1. Munshi Bhawanidas, a Kashmiri Pandit was an accomplished Persian scholar and besides wrote poetry of exquisite merit. He was greatly patronised by Jumma Khan.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

in order to baffle him pursued the query further and asked as to why he had annointed his ear tips also with the same substance. Without a moment's thought Dila Ram replied that the two marks were in token of two witnesses needed to prove a fact according to Muslim law (Shara). Taimur Shah put a third question as to why he had a mark on his throat as well. Dila Ram replied that this mark signified that the person who denies the truth of this statement needs being hanged. The witty repartee over, Taimur Shah bade him to state the true significance of the Tilak mark. Pandit Dila Ram read out a Persian couplet in answer which runs as follows:—

Bar chahram Nazr kun Peshaniam bibeen,
Dagi gulamie shahi Maulast bar Jabin.

"Cast a glance over my face and look to my forehead, there you will find a mark which singles me out as a slave of the Lord."[1]

Dila Ram came back to Kashmir richly laden with honours by the Kabul king. His various qualities of head and heart, his rich experience of men and affairs, his immense store of wit and humour and above all his affable manners and mild disposition won for him the friendship of many people at Kabul. But in Kashmir he had trouble

1. Sat Dharm Pracharak by Shiv Bhart.

ahead of him. There were conspiracies and cliques against him. For long did Dila Ram hold his own against all the unholy cliques of his enemies. But unsettled as the times were, they had not to wait for long. They soon got a propitious time for putting into practice their nefarious designs. Not only was Pandit Dila Ram Quli killed, but the community to which he belonged was also made to suffer those untold miseries the like of which one fails to find anywhere in the annals of the civilised world.

Jumma Khan's closing years would have been rather peaceful but for the construction of a Matam Sarai by Shias which was greatly resented by the Sunni Muslims. The building was demolished and a severe warning was administered to the Shias against their introducing such practices as caused resentment to the Sunnis. There was also an insurrection by Khokha and Bomba chieftains but it was soon suppressed. Jumma Khan died in the year 1792 A. D. and was succeeded by Mirza Khan. Mirza Khan who was of a religious bent of mind did not remain in Kashmir for more than four months. He installed in his place his son Mir Hazar Khan and himself became a religious recluse.

CHAPTER XIX

Dila Ram's Murder and After

MIR HAZAR KHAN, the next Subedar created a record of his own perhaps unbeaten in the annals of Kashmir by his most merciless and brutal treatment that he meted out to the Kashmiri Pandits. There have been Subedars such as Karim Dad Khan and Azad who disfigured and blackened the pages of Kashmir history by their misdeeds, but Mir Hazar Khan is a category by himself. He was laden with the hatred of the Pandits in an unbounded measure, and the result was that he was satisfied not only with killing them or drowning them in the rivers which he certainly did, but he chalked out well-planned methods to wipe them out of their existence. But with all this, he failed as the subsequent history of this country has shown.

Mir Hazar Khan, soon after his assuming the reins of the administration of the country, declared his independence. Taimur Shah, the Kabul king breathed his last and was succeeded by Zaman Khan. Zaman Khan confirmed Mir Hazar Khan's appointment but at the same time wished Mir Hazar to send to Kabul the annual tribute. There was enough of unsettledness at Kabul.

Mir Hazar taking advantage of this state of affairs, refused point blank to make the payment and along with this announced that he would thereafter rule as an independent king. A reign of terror was ushered in Kashmir, which took its first victim in Pandit Dila Ram who was murdered at Khanayar in the year 1793 A. D.[1] After the murder of Dila Ram, a systematic process was adopted for the extermination of the whole lot of the Pandits. A regular Kashmiri Pandit hunt was had recourse to by him and various were the methods adopted for their killing." Thousands of them were killed by ordinary and known methods. Many more were put in sacks and drowned in the Dal Lake, and those who survived were harassed in such a manner that they forgot even Faqir Ullah's zulum".[2] A number of the Kashmiri Pandit notables of Baramulla—a town near Srinagar—were arrested, then humiliated and ultimately put in prison and later on drowned in Jhelum river.[3] Realizing that it was futile to attempt at the extermination of a whole race, he tried to make the life of the surviving lot both impossible and miserable. Jazia was again imposed upon the whole community.[4] Not satisfied with this, he promulgated another equally abnoxious order. The Pandits were

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq and Hassan.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan and Fauq.
3. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru
4. History of Kashmir by Hassan and Fauq.

strictly forbidden to read Persian[1] and the penalty for the infringement was certain death. The degrading and unwholesome consequences of this latter order can well be understood when we bear in mind that the Persian was then the court language and all affairs of the State were conducted in this language. It is a known fact that the Kashmiri Pandits' mastery over the Persian language was second only to the Persians. The result was that they secured an entrance into the administration of the country. But Mir Hazar wanted them to be ousted for all time from the administrative machinery and this he could achieve with ease, if no Persian knowing Pandit was available. But then there were Pandits who continued in service, mostly in Daftari Diwani (Accounts Department). He abolished the Daftari Diwani, which was so well organised by Dila Ram. The Pandits' aptitude for service in the Accounts Department is well known. With its abolition they were all thrown out.[2] The result was that a Pandit became for the time being a waif, a destitute creature, a man nobody to support him or to care for him. But this was as short lived as the career of Mir Hazar himself. The Pandit yet again rose. The news in those days travelled very slow, but the news about the declaration of Mir Hazar's independence

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.
2. Ibid.

and the zulum he perpetrated reached Kabul after all. Zaman Khan who was busy elsewhere did not deem it advisable to depute a military campaign against Mir Hazar but in its stead he deputed Mirza Khan, Mir Hazar's father to Kashmir to bring the latter round by peaceful methods. Mirza Khan tried his best to wean his son from the path he had chosen but failed and was imprisoned by Mir Hazar. After this there was no other alternative left for Zaman Khan but to send an army against Mir Hazar. A huge army was sent under the command of a veteran General by name Ahmad Khan. Mir Hazar Khan also started with a huge force and the two armies met at Baramulla. Before fighting any engagement, Mir Hazar Khan brought out of prison all the Pandit notables who were suffering imprisonment at Baramulla and drowned them in river Jhelum.[1] But Mir Hazar was soon defeated in the battle that was fought at Baramulla. He fled from the scene of action and took refuge in the Shah Hamdan mosque at Srinagar. But he was soon arrested and put in prison. Thus ended the inglorious career of a person who shed the innocent blood of peaceful and harmless citizens for no other purpose but that of satisfying his own perverted desires. Mir Hazar thus beaten, Rahmatullah

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq. See also History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

Khan became the Subedar. He was not destined to remain long in Kashmir, and was soon after recalled by the king. He went to Kabul carrying with himself a Kashmiri Pandit by name Nand Ram Tiku, who in course of time rose to the eminent place of Diwan at Kabul and changed the course of Kashmir history more than once. Kifayat Khan now came to succeed him. He was in a marked contrast to Mir Hazar—just, humane and kind, but he too was recalled by the king of Kabul after a short period of three months. There is nothing of importance during his regime excepting a Shia Sunni riot which was the result of a private enmity between a Shia and a Sunni notable. Arsala Khan followed next as the Subedar in 1795 A. D. He appointed Mohammad Khan as his deputy. He also had quite a short lived career. The past two years were a period of total unsettledness which was the legacy left by Mir Hazar. Palace intrigues, marauding expeditions of the Bombas, internecine quarrels of rival factional heads are the main noteworthy events of these two fateful years, which created a veritable hell in the country. Abdullah Khan Alkozai now appears on the scene as Subedar in 1796 A. D.

CHAPTER XX

Pandit becomes Dewan at Kabul.

Abdullah Khan had a tremendously ardous task to accomplish. There was alround unsettledness in the country. Marauding bands of robbers and thieves had infested the whole country and nobody felt his life, honour or property safe. The petty Bomba and Khokha chiefs had become a nuisance in Kamraj, and kept on constantly committing depredations over there, looting plundering and killing the people. But Abdullah Khan was a man of great courage and organizing skill and possessed a keen eye for singling out individuals to carry on his administration. He appointed in preference to other Muslim notables, Pandit Sahaj Ram Dar as his Sahib Kar[1] and delegated to him all the administrative functions as were necessary to bring about a rehabilitation of the country. Pandit Sahaj Ram was a man of great talent and marked statesmanship and was devoid of all the vices which sometimes accompany exaltation to a high office. The Pandit engaged himself in right earnest upon the task of the rehabilitation of the country. The army was in a hopeless condition. Even a skirmish with a neighbouring petty

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

chieftain, it could not conduct successfully. Abdullah Khan with the aid and assistance of his Pandit Sahib Kar organized the army and subjugated all the neighbouring principalities of Poonch, Kamraj etc. The Bombas were totally beaten. Agriculture was specially attended to and after years of famine and scarcity, people witnessed a bumper crop. The price of Shali (unhusked rice) was reduced to twelve annas a Khirwar.[1] No wonder then that Pandit Sahaj Ram became very popular and his fame travelled far and wide. The things went on smoothly for some time, when another factor intervened which broke the harmony of peace and progress which the country had witnessed after a long period of unsettledness and oppression.

We have already referred to Pandit Nand Ram Tiku who went to Kabul and settled there. Pandit Nand Ram was a man of great sagacity and tact. He came to the notice of Wazir Wafadar Khan who was then the Chief Minister of Zaman Khan, the king of Kabul. The Wazir took Nand Ram in his service. Gradually Nand Ram rose to the exalted position of Diwan at Kabul. He is credited at one time with having struck coin in his own name with the inscription "*Sim az mabud wa zarb az Nand Ram.*" This rupee was known as Nand

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

Rami rupee and was in circulation in the Tribal area till at least 1910 A. D.[1] A number of Kashmiri Pandits now settled at Kabul, chief amongst whom besides Nand Ram was Pandit Daya Ram Kachru "Khushdil," the father of Birbar Kachru the historian. Pandit Nand Ram had a brother residing in Kashmir, whose name was Pandit Hara Das. By dint of his brother's influence Hara Das came to be reckoned as a most important figure in Kashmir. The annual tribute was sent to Kabul through him, and he lived a life of great pomp and power.[2] It was not unnatural that his relations with the Subedar became strained. Hara Das apprised his brother Pandit Nand Ram of this, who at once got an order issued from the king calling Abdullah Khan to Kabul. Abdullah Khan on arrival at Kabul was imprisoned in Bala Hazar fort at the suggestion of Pandit Nand Ram Tiku.[3] Abdullah Khan had left his brother Atta Mohammad Khan to conduct the administration in his absence, but another brother of his Vakil Khan secured an appointment order from the King and accompanied by a huge force went to Kashmir. On the instigation of his brother Abdullah Khan, Atta Mohammad Khan gave battle to Vakil Khan, defeated him and killed him. Along with this, he put Pandit

1. Qaidi Yagistan. See also Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.
3. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

Hara Das Tiku in prison. It was during these unsettled days that again a Shia Sunni riot took place in which untold miseries were inflicted upon the Shias. Their houses were burnt, property looted and many of them were killed. In the meanwhile Kabul witnessed a great deal of unrest due to the rebellion of Mohammad Shah. Abdullah Khan took advantage of this unsettledness and secured his release from the prison by offering a huge bribe to his jailor. He at once hurried towards Kashmir and on arrival there he started as an independent ruler. Shuja-ul-Mulk who had by now wrested the throne of Kabul from Mohammad Shah tried to win over Abdullah Khan by persuasion and reasoning, but having failed he at once sent Sher Mohammad Khan with a huge army to teach Abdullah Khan a lesson. Abdullah Khan also made mighty preparations to meet the royal forces, but was after all defeated and killed. During the later portion of the rule of Abdullah Khan, there occurred a very severe earthquake in Kashmir, which resulted in a great deal of damage to life and property. Huge craters appeared on earth's surface which engulfed many lives. This was followed by devastating floods which rendered (besides taking a sufficient toll of human life) many thousands homeless. As if all this was not sufficient, the wrath of nature further manifested itself in a most severe winter. River Jhelum and all the lakes became a

solid mass of ice. Abdullah having been defeated, Sher Mohammed Khan remained in Kashmir for about five months restoring order and setting other matters right. He got his son Atta Mohammad appointed as Subedar in 1807 and himself left for Kabul.

CHAPTER XXI

Pandit Sahaj Ram - The Diwan.

AMONGST all the Kashmiri Pandits who rose to prominence during Afghan period of Kashmir history, there is the personality of Sahaj Ram Dar who by dint of his far-sightedness, sagacity and political wisdom, continued at the helm of affairs for a very long time. Kingships rose and fell in Kabul, Subedars were appointed and dismissed in Kashmir, rebellions occured one after the other in Kashmir, but Sahaj Ram Dar continued in his office with his power and prestige undiminished. Today we find a loyal Subedar appointing him as his Madar-ulmiham. The next day the Subedar turns a rebel, but Pandit Sahaj Ram continues as before. The rebel Subedar is defeated and replaced by a loyal one, but Pandit Sahaj-Ram is there and wins fresh honours and prizes. And this goes on for a number of years and during the reigns of many Subedars. In this he can be compared to the French statesman Talleyrand. But there *is* one thing which distinguishes Pandit Sahaj Ram from the French statesman. Unlike the French statesman, Sahaj Ram was neither faithless nor an opportunist. He never turned a traitor to his masters, but served them, honestly and loyally as long as cir-

cumstances permitted him to do so, but after their fall he never betrayed them.

In the last chapter we have seen how Abdullah Khan appointed Pandit Sahaj Ram as his Sahib Kar. After his rebellion and defeat Atta Mohammad Khan was appointed as Subedar in the year 1807 A. D. Atta Mohammad in spite the fact that Pandit Sahaj Ram had sided with the rebel chief Abdullah Khan in his turn also appointed Sahaj Ram as his Diwan,[1] indeed a high tribute to his integrity and great administrative merit.

The relation of Kashmir with Kabul those days was that of a crown appanage and periodical accounts had to be submitted to the Afghan king, in addition to the annual tribute. Pandit Sahaj Ram as Diwan was in charge of the accounts also. We, therefore, find Pandit Sahaj Ram Dar next going to Kabul with the accounts of the country which were to be presented to the king there. But while crossing Indus in a ferry the pony which carried the accounts took fright and jumped into the river and got drowned along with the accounts. But unmindful of the loss of the accounts, Sahaj Ram pursued his journey and on reaching Kabul sought audience with the king and related to him the mishhap, but he undertook to prepare

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

a duplicate from his memory within a short period of only four days. This was done and the accounts were found to tally in every detail with the copy of the accounts which was lying at Kashmir and later sent for from there. This pleased the king beyond measure. He bestowed a Khillat and the hereditary title of Diwan upon him. Besides this the villages of Dachhan Para and Marhama were bestowed upon him as Jagir in perpetuity. In addition to this, Pandit Sahaj Ram secured the Governership of Kamraj for his brother Mirza Pandit, and the Illaqa of Deosar for Pandit Birbar.[1] The latter, after making his appearance on the political scene, as we shall soon see, played a decisive part in the history of Kashmir.[2]

Atta Mohammad Khan started his career as the Subedar with very great promise. Himself a man of simple habits, and deep religious convictions, he bestowed his earnest attention upon raising the material prosperity of the people of Kashmir. In this he largely drew upon the administrative skill of his Diwan Pandit Sahaj Ram. Under the guidance and supervision of the Pandit, agriculture was improved, and during his regime bumper harvests came to be reaped after a period of decay and despair. Trade was revived

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1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq and Hassan.

as a result of administrative stability which was established in a short period. But then there was again unrest at Kabul. This time Mohammad Shah conducted a successful rebellion against Shah Shuja, who was then the king of Kabul. Shah Shuja escaped and took shelter with Maharaja Ranjit Singh.[1] The anarchic state of affairs at Kabul had its reactions upon Atta Mohammad too, and following the footsteps of his predecessors he also declared his independence. But Mohammad Shah could not take this affrontry on the part of the Subedar lying down, and he deputed a huge force under the command of a veteran general Akram Khan Bamezai for the conquest of Kashmir. But the expedition led by Bamezai met with a total defeat and Atta Mohammad came back to Srinagar, victorious and happy. Atta Mohammad did not remain content only with having scored a victory. He built a fortress on the top of the Hari Parbat hill and many more in Sopore, Baramulla, and other towns. A munition factory was started and the army was re-organised and strengthened. But Kashmir had not vanished from the eyes of Mohammad Shah—the Kabul ruler. Again he organised an expedition for its conquest—this time under another general of greater fame though not of much talent—by name Wazir Fateh Mohommad Khan. It seems

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

that Atta Mohammad Khan in order to hide the true purpose of his rebellion under the cloak of bolstering up the claims of a defeated puppet king, and also to win support of his partisans in the Afghan country opened negotiations with Shah Shuja to come to Kashmir. Diwan Nand Ram Tiku[1] was deputed to approach Shah Shuja. Diwan Nand Ram succeeded in his mission and Shah Shuja came to Kashmir, only to find himself a virtual prisoner in the newly built Hari Parbat fort. Atta Mohammad Khan now took the time by the forlock and deputed his brother Jahandar Khan to seize the Attok fort which in those days commanded the gateway to Kashmir. Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan the Afghan General, dared not attack the fort and opened negotiations with Maharaja Ranjit Singh for help. The Maharaja agreed to help the Wazir on condition that an annual tribute of eight lacs was paid to him from the Kashmir revenues. The condition have been accepted, the Sikh ruler deputed Diwan Mohkam Chand with a considerable force to help Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan and in the battle that ensued at Rawalpora village, Atta Mohammad was defeated, some of his close followers having played a treacherous part at the cruicial moment. Atta Mohammad after a further feeble and unsuccessful resistance opened negotiations with Diwan

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

Mohkam Chand, and succeeded in getting a safe passage back to Kabul. Diwan Mohkam Chand also left Kashmir, but not without taking a Hundi for eight lacs of rupees.

Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan did not stay in Kashmir for more than a few months, and accompanied by Diwan Nand Ram Tiku he left for Kabul leaving the administration of the country in the hands of his brother Azim Khan in the year 1813 A. D. Azim Khan then appointed Sahaj Ram Dar as his Diwan, and Pandit Haradas Tiku as his Sahib Kar,[1] the latter appointment probably having been made to ward off opposition on behalf of his brother Diwan Nand Ram Tiku who as has been already mentioned was a great notable figure at Kabul. By this the whole administrative machinery was put under the Pandits. Atta Mohammad Khan on his way to Kabul handed over the Attok fort to Maharaja Ranjit Singh in lieu of one lac of rupees which the latter paid him. Azim Khan interpreted this action of the Sikh Maharaja as a breach of faith on his part and refused to pay the annual tribute of eight lacs which was stipulated with him by Wazir Fateh Mohammad Khan in consideration of the help which he had secured from Maharaja Ranjit Singh against Atta Mohammad Khan. Ranjit Singh was greatly incensed

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

at the unseemly behaviour of the Subedar, and he at once ordered an expedition to be organized for the conquest of Kashmir. On his part Azim Khan also made strong prepartions to meet his formidable foe. But this expedition of Ranjit Singh met with a complete disaster. Sikh forces were routed and it was with very great difficulty that the main force which was under the direct command of the Sikh ruler was saved from total annihilation. With Sikhs driven out of the country, Azad Khan returned back to Srinagar fully intoxicated with his victory. What repercussions this event had on the general condition of the Pandits will be presently seen.

CHAPTER XXII

Pandits after the Sikh Retreat.

THE defeat of the Sikhs which was equally due to bad strategy and the wrath of nature, resulted in no distant future in a complete reversal of the previously prevailing administrative policy so far as the Pandits were concerned. It was given out that the Sikh invasion was the result of Pandit invitation. May be that some Pandits had looked on the Sikh invasion as a means to liberate themselves from the Afghan yoke; and this too is possible that a few of them may have actually though clandestinely helped it. But there is no direct proof forthcoming to prove their complicity in this affair, excepting a strong suspicion, based upon the fact that there were many Kashmiri Pandits, some of them very highly placed, at the Sikh Durbar with whom the Pandits of Kashmir were connected by ties of blood. The fact that the Sikhs till then were hardly distinguishable from the Hindus must have also contributed towards strengthening such a suspicion. Whether or not there was truth in this suspicion, it is a fact that there were people who kept on fanning its flame against the Pandits. The Muslim notables whose power and prestige when compared to the Pandits was almost

negligible now came on the scene. The abortive invasion of Ranjit Singh gave them an easy handle. They dinned into Azim's ears that the Pandit notables were at the root of the Sikh invasion of Kashmir. In particular, they singled out Pandit Haradas about whom the allegation was that he was the head of the clique which had extended an invitation to the Sikh Ruler. Azim Khan easily believed all this and turned his attention towards the Pandits. Pandit Haradas was the first victim of this orgy and was killed in 1813 A. D.[1] There were others too who were similarly treated. Their Jagirs were confiscated and Jazia was imposed on the whole lot.[2] Most of them were humiliated and ousted out of all places of power, and in the confusion that followed a Muslim notable by name Nur Shah Diwani was thrown into prominence, whose rise to power proved as short-lived as his mischievous activities abortive. But the treatment meted out to the Pandits, though harsh and cruel beyond measure, did not produce any good result so far as the breaking of Pandit power went. Pandit Sahaj Ram was there at the head of administration and there were many more whom Azim could not touch. But yet the suspicion about the Pandit's complicity in Ranjit Singh's invasion was being daily strengthened.

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq and Hassan.
2. Ibid.

The rival Muslim clique fully exploited this impression. How could the Subedar remain safe as long as the Pandit was there? They had to be destroyed root and branch if Kashmir had to continue as an Afghan Province. Such were the arguments with which they kept his suspicions alive. But even Azim Khan could not dare carry his designs against the Pandits too far; at least openly he dared not to do so. But Nur Shah offered to solve the problem in a manner which though clumsy in essence appeared to both of them ingenious enough at least for the time being. It was settled between them that Nur Shah would invite all the Pandit notables, including Mirza Pandit, the brother of Pandit Sahaj Ram to his house and having seated them in a Hamam suffocate them there to death by heating the Hamam to its capacity. Azim approved of this scheme, but said that the deed should be done in his absence from the city. This ill fated conspiracy was in progress for some time when on the fateful day a private servant of Azim Khan apprised Sahaj Ram of all that was transpiring behind the scene between the Subedar and Nur Shah. Sahaj Ram was further told by servant that Nur Shah had that very time come to inform the Subedar that the Pandit notables had assembled in his house. Nur Shah held a hurried private conversation with the Subedar, which mainly dealt with the maturity of all his nefarious plans and

also the assemblage of the Pandits in his house. With the connivance of Azim's private servant Sahaj Ram overheard the whole conversation. The Subedar, as already stated, was not willing to the perpetration of the crime during his presence in the city. He therefore left that very moment for Shalimar garden. Sahaj Ram also left the place instantaneously in a boat and stopped just on the Ghat near the house of Nur Shah. He scribed a solitary line on a chit which ran as: "*Jazira ki makani tu bud ab girift*," i.e. "the island on which stood your house is gone under flood waters." Hayat a sagacious boatman in service of Sahaj Ram was commissioned to carry the chit to Mirza Pandit in Nur Shah's house. Hayat went inside Nur Shah's house and kept standing near the door leading to the Hamam. From the unexpected arrival of Hayat, Mirza Pandit divined that there was something extraordinary going to happen. Hayat came forward under the pretence of trimming the wick of the lamp when he dropped the chit near Mirza Pandit. Mirza Pandit read the chit, but waited for a moment. Without rousing any suspicion, he got up and leaving his shawl behind inquired if a privy existed there. Under this pretence he came out and ran away followed by Hayat and joined his brother at the ghat, where he was informed of the conspiracy.[1] After

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
See also History of Dars by Krishna Dar.

some time it became known to Nur Shah that Mirza Pandit had played a ruse and had flown from the trap which was so cunningly laid for him. Confused, confounded and crest-fallen Nur Shah sent his own men to fetch him back, but the party returned unsuccessful. Meanwhile the other guests also ran away in the melee that ensued. Next morning Sahaj Ram and his brother Mirza Pandit went to Shalimar to meet the Subedar. Subedar was all along preparing himself to receive the news about the death of Mirza Pandit and other Pandits, when Sahaj Ram came in. The Diwan and his brother had a bit of plain speaking with the Subedar. They related the whole tale to him, how the conspiracy was hatched; how they caught scent of it, how they thwarted it in the middle, and ended it in an ignominous failure. Thay also rebuked him for falling a prey to the machinations of intriguers which was simply hastening his own doom. Subedar felt very much embarrassed and readily agreed to abide by any terms which they suggested. Mirza Pandit laid a formal complaint against Nur Shah who after Sikh defeat was put in charge of revenue collection. The complaint was that Nur Shah had looted the country side. Mirza Pandit bound himself to pay four lacs of rupees if he was allowed to deal with Nur Shah directly. This was agreed to by Azim Khan, and Mirza Pandit was armed with a written authority for

the arrest of Nur Shah and the search of of his house. A party of Shah Aqasis was put at Pandit's disposal.[1] Laden with the requisite authority, Mirza Pandit returned and while he was crossing the Dal Lake, he came across Nur Shah. At once he got him arrested who was tied hand and foot with his own turban. On reaching Srinagar, his house was searched but no money was forthcoming when the carpenter who had constructed the ceilings informed that the money was concealed inside the ceiling. At once the house was raised to the ground and money was recovered. Nur Shah fell never to rise and thus ended the abortive attempt at annihilating the whole lot of the Pandit notables.

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
See also History of Dars.

CHAPTER XXIII

Pandits and End of Afghan Rule.

AZIM KHAN received the stipulated sum of money from Mirza Pandit and was naturally happy over the whole affair. In token of his pleasure and also to wash off the bitter memory of his complicity in a base conspiracy against the Pandits, he appointed Mirza Pandit, Birbar Dar and Sukh Ram Safaya, three leading Pandits as the revenue collectors. All went well for some time when fresh intrigues came to be hatched. The ignominous fall of a prominent Muslim notable like Nur Shah at the hands of Mirza Pandit, was too bitter a pill for other Muslim notables to swallow. But yet for the time being they were impotent to do anything effective. Naturally they bided their time.

It transpired that as Revenue Collector a sum of a lac of rupees remained due from Pandit Birbar Dar. This sum could not be realized from the zamindars as due to a bad weather a major portion of the crops had remained unripe. But the Subedar perhaps under the pressure exerted upon him by some interested people from behind the scenes, pressed hard upon Pandit Birbar to make the payment. Birbar argued

and argued to his best power and merit that the failure of the crops was no fault of his and that the zamindars could not be forced to make a payment which was beyond their means; but with all this, he failed to make an effect upon the mind of the Subedar. At last in sheer exasperation he spoke at the face of the Subedar in open Durbar when the latter was surrounded by his courtiers and others:—

Ma Khamiye fasl az khudai
shuma Mujra megiram."

"Am I to get credit for the failure of crops from your God."[1]

This insult flung at the face of the Subedar was more than he could bear, but yet dared not take any drastic action. The demand upon Pandit Birbar was continued and one hundred Qazlibashes (soldiers) where deputed to his house for securing the payment from him. There was a general consternation amongst the Pandits. They had not forgotten the reprisals which Azim had taken against them on a mere suspicion that they were connected with the Sikh invasion. What were they to do? It seemed that Azim Khan was out to ruin them. A secret meeting was held by them which was attended by almost all the Pandit notables. It was resolved in the meeting that Maharaja Ranjit Singh be invited to effect a

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq. See also Hassan.

conquest of the country. It was also settled that Pandit Birbar accompanied by his minor son Raja Kak shall secretly run away to Lahore and present to the Sikh ruler a petition signed by the Pandit notables by which, an invitation was extended to him to occupy Kashmir.[1] The Subedar did somehow get scent about the intentions of Pandit Birbar, and he inquired of Mirza Pandit, if Birbar had proposed flight from the country. Mirza Pandit denied the truth underlying his suspicions and even stood surety for Birbar's stay in Kashmir. Subedar thus satisfied, Mirza Pandit went to Birbar and told him that time was ripe for his flight and any further delay will spell ruin. In consequence Birbar left Srinagar along with his minor son Pandit Raja Kak and having stayed at Deosar for sometime, he effected a secret flight and crossed the Pir with the help of the local Muslim Maliks.[2] The news about his flight could not remain a secret for long and in due course reached the Subedar also. Pursuit parties were organized and sent after Pandit Birbar but they returned back unsuccessful. Attention was turned towards the Maliks who had helped Birbar to cross the Pir Panchal pass. Some of the Maliks were killed, their houses were burnt to ashes and their property looted. But all this went in vain. Pandit

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq. See also Hassan.
2. Ibid.

Birbar safely crossed the pass. Mirza Pandit was summoned. And the dialogue that ensued between them is given here in extenso :—

Subedar : Where is Birbar ?
Mirza Pandit : I do not know.
Subedar : I hear that he has run away.
Mirza Pandit : May be that he has run away.
Subedar : What will he do if he has run away.
Mirza Pandit : If he feels disgusted with the world's ways, he might turn a recluse and go to Ganga to practise his austerities there, or else he will bring the Sikhs on you.
Subedar : What do you advise?
Mirza Pandit : Killing of Mirza Pandit.
Subedar : What about the money due from Birbar ?
Mirza Pandit : Debit it in the name of Mirza Pandit.

This dialogue is given verbatim from Hassan's history which was written a little less than a century ago and is fully corroborated by other historians. At the time Hassan wrote his history, there must have been many people living who were eye witnesses to all this.

But far from being satisfied with these answers, the answers only added fire to the burning rage of the Subedar. He was totally upset and in sheer exasperation he began

to plan fresh reprisals against Pandit Birbar Dar and his family. Birbar having gone away beyond his reach, the Subedar turned his attention towards his lady-folk. A search was made for his wife and daughter-in-law but no trace of them could be found anywhere. The Pandits had already foreseen the fate which would befall upon these two ladies after Birbar's flight and they were therefore kept concealed in the house of a trusted Muslim gentleman, Qadus Gojwari. The Subedar could not bear all this. He caught hold of Pandit Basa Kak 'Harkara Bashi' to trace them out. Pandit Basa Kak knew the place where the ladies were hiding but he refused point blank to divulge the secret. All sorts of conceivable tortures were practised upon Pandit Basa Kak. For nine days he was made to pay a fine of nine thousand rupees, as a penalty for his refusal to trace the ladies. On the tenth day his belly was ripped open and he was killed in a most ruthless manner. But yet the ladies could not be found.[1] However the secret could not remain a secret for long. The ladies were traced in Qadus Gojwari's house. Soldiers were deputed to bring them. The ladies were caught. Pandit Birbar's wife swallowed a piece of diamond on her way to Sherghari which was the seat of the Government. The ladies were produced before Azim Khan. Pandit Birbar's wife

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

thunderd out at the face of Azim Khan that the cruel tortures to which she and other Pandits were being subjected would have its effect one day and the result would be the end of Afghan rule.[1] She had not yet finished when she fell dead on the floor due perhaps to the effects of diamond which she had swallowed. The younger lady was forcibly converted to Islam and handed over to some Afghan notable, who carried her to Kabul.

But all this was useless, when compared to the successes which Pandit Birbar was achieving in his mission. After he had fled from Kashmir, some more Pandits secretly followed him. They all reached Jammu. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu received them well, and gave them an introductory letter to his brother Dhian Singh who was then the Prime Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Least did Raja Gulab Singh know then that the drama that was being enacted then on the soil of Kashmir and in which the Kashmiri Pandits were the chief actors, was designed by an inscrutable providence only to pave the path for his mastery over this land. Pandit Birbar through the kind offices of Raja Dhian Singh, and the help he received from Kashmiri Pandit notables at the Sikh Ruler's Court got an audience with the Sikh Ruler and laid before him

1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

the petition of the Kashmiri Pandits, and further apprised him of all the happenings in Kashmir. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, as has already been noticed in these pages, had met with a complete discomfiture in his previous Kashmir campaign and was therefore not willing to embark upon a fresh campaign about the sequel of which he was not very sure. But he succumbed before the advocacy of Pandit Birbar and other Pandits and ordered the organization and equipment of a considerable force, but not without making Birbar stand a surety for any mishap or loss that might befall upon the army and for this purpose asked him to leave his only son Pandit Raja Kak, who was a minor, behind as a hostage .To all this Pandit Birbar consented.[1]

Azim Khan was all the time, when Pandit Birbar was negotiating with the Sikh Chief, busy tormenting those Pandits whom he suspected of being in Birbar's confidence. Many Pandit notables were detained in a concentration camp at Nishat Bagh.[2] But when the news reached that Birbar was successfully negotiating with the Sikh Ruler, he lost all nerve and sought advice from Pandit Sahaj Ram Dar. The Pandit pointed out to him the disaster which lay ahead of him, and in particular advised him

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

to send off his harem to Kabul which was the only way to save them from that fate which Azim Khan had meted out to the wife and daughter-in-law of Pandit Birbar. In this the Pandit stood in a glaring contrast to those Muslim notables who by their ill advised counsel goaded Azim Khan against the Pandits and brought disaster on his head.

Forlorn and foresaken by all, and disgusted with his own methods, Azim Khan made a request to Pandit Sahaj Ram to accompany the ladies of his house-hold to Kabul. Sahaj Ram readily acceded to his request and escorted his ladies to Kabul and also carried his property consisting of cash and other articles to that place.[1] Sahaj Ram returned from Kabul and in due course Azim Khan also left the country, leaving the reins of the country's rule in the hands of his brother Jabbar Khan whose career was both shortlived and ignominous. On his way to Kabul Azim took Pandit Suraj Tiku son of Pandit Haradas with himself with the hope that some money may be forced out of him. But having failed to get anything out of him, he put the Pandit to death near Baramulla.

But to return to Birbar. Birbar having consented to all the conditions which

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had laid, an army of 30,000 strong under the command of such veteran Generals as Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, Hari Singh Nalwa, Sardars Jawala Singh, Hukum Singh and Sham Singh was sent along with him. Jabbar Khan also collected a strong army to meet Pandit Birbar and his Sikh supporters. The Sikh army encamped at Sidhaw, a Karewa near Shopyan and Jabbar Khan went via Chrar Sharif, where a coloured piece of cloth was tied round his turban as a mark of good omen. The Sikh Generals having heard of the approach of the Afghan forces, ordered a march, and also began to study the enemy forces with binoculars. Sardar Phul Singh who saw a Pathan riding a horse with something strange tied round his turban, inquired of Birbar Dar, as to who this strange person was. Birbar saw him throught he binocular and at once recognized him as Jabbar Khan. Phul Singh aimed his gun at him, and wounded him in his thigh. He would have fallen from his horse but for the timely help he received from a faithful servant of his who kept him tied with the horse. There was a general consternation and the Afghan army fell back in a melee. Some of them left the country along with Jabbar Khan who died at Baramulla and others went into hiding and many more were killed. On 20th of June 1819 A. D. Pandit Birbar Dar and his valiant band of the Pandits along with the Sikh army made a triumphant

entry into the city of Srinagar, and demonstrated to a wondering world, that even a handful of people if actuated by selfless motives, can make even mountains move.

Pandit Birbar was a man of a very high character and in his eyes no sacrifice was too great if offered in a right cause. Unmindul of the suicide of his noble wife, forcible conversion and abduction of his daughter-in-law and death by torture inflicted upon his closest friends and relatives, he pursued his course with an undaunted spirit and achieved success in his mission which was to drive out the Afghans from his country. But in his success he did not forget the duty he owed to his countrymen, the majority of whom were Muslims. The Sikhs wanted to plunder the city, but he stood in their way. And when Phul Singh wanted to demolish the sacred mosque of Shah Hamdan, it was Pandit Birbar Dar who at considerable risk to his life stood in his way, and made him desist from a course[1] which would have blackened Phul Singh's name in the pages of history for all time. For this act alone even if we forget his other achievements, Birbar Dar is destined to live in history as an upholder of those traditions which have always stood for the Pandits as a bulwark to protect them from the onslaughts of time.

Thus ended the Afghan rule in Kashmir.

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq. See also Hassan.

CHAPTER XXIV

A Survey of Afghan Rule in Kashmir.

IN the foregoing pages we have noticed the establishment and the end of the Afghan rule and have also described the varying methods which were adopted by individual Subedars in discharge of their administrative functions. Some of them were harsh and cruel. Some were of a moderate bent of mind, but generally they tried to establish an independent rule. But it may by no means be supposed that the Afghans were in any sense of the term religious maniacs fired with a fanatical zeal for the propagation of their faith. Their methods of Government were indeed crude and sometimes very cruel and oppressive, but all this had a political background and seldom theocratic. Forster who visited Kabul in 1783 A. D. says that he observed on his arrival at Kabul a common toleration of religion; that Christians, Hindus and Jews openly professed their creed and pursued their occupations without molestation.[1] At another place the same gentleman observes that "Among the foreign nations who frequent this city (Kabul) the Hindus chiefly

1. Forster's Travels. Forster went to Kashmir in 1783 A. D.

of Peshawar contribute more than any other to enrich it by a superior industry and knowledge of commerce; and they enjoy under the Afghan Government a liberty and protection little short of that experienced by the inhabitants of our Indian possessions. The benefits derived by a State from the residence of any class of people usually ensure to them a security of person and property, but the Hindus of Kabul are indebted I believe for special indulgence to one of their own sect, who controls the revenue of the Shah and stands high in favour."[1] This tradition of religious toleration was carried with themselves by the Subedars who were deputed to Kashmir from Kabul. As a result we find that though at times the Kashmiri Pandits as a racial group were very harshly treated. but there was no ban on their appointment to any post, civil or military, on the ground of religion and as a matter of fact the history of Afghan rule in Kashmir will remain quite incomplete without mentioning the Kashmiri Pandit. Even during this period of unsettledness merchants and commercial agents of most of the principal cities of Northern India and also from Turkey. Persia and Tartary[2] were seen in Kashmir. Forster adds "But the heavy oppressions of the Government and the rapacious temper of the bordering states, who exercise an

1. Forster's Travels.
2. Ibid.

unremitting rapacity on the foreign traders and often plunder whole cargoes, have reduced the commerce of Kashmir to a declining and a languid state,"........with the result "that during Mogul rule the province contained forty thousand shawl looms and at this day there are not sixteen thousand." Forster at other place regrets that "since the dismemberment of Kashmir from the Empire of Hindostan, it has been subject to the Afghans, who possessing neither the genius nor liberality of the Moguls have suffered its elegant structures to crumble into ruins and to hold out against them a severe testimony of the barbarity of their nation." It should be borne in mind that though Kashmir was a province under Afghanistan, there were many small principalities situate between Kashmir and Afghanistan, which were for all intents and purposes independent. This led to the weakening of the link between the two countries with the result that the central authority at Kabul did not interfere in Kashmir affairs, even though a Subedar may have grievously misbehaved, as long as the annual tribute was regularly paid. Forster explains this state affairs with the remark "But when it is considered that the approach to this remote province leads through hostile or independent territories that Taimur Shah (Kabul king) is equally withheld from distant enterprise by the accumulated arrears and consequent weakness of his army to

which may be added the fear of domestic treason a sufficient cause will be seen for his passive regard to the interior Government of Kashmir, contenting himself with the tribute, he is seldom disposed to control the conduct of a remote Governor." The result of this weak central policy was that almost all the Subedars deputed from Kabul declared their independence at one time or the other and most of them made themselves responsible for very cruel and oppressive methods of administration. Forster adds that "during my residence in Kashmir I often witnessed the harsh treatment which the common people received at the hands of their masters, who rarely issued an order without a blow of the side of their hatchet a common weapon of the Afghans." At other place Forster remarks "that this extreme rigour has sensibly affected the deportment and manners of Kashmirians who shrink with dread from the Afghan oppression." According to the same author "the manners of the people have undergone a manifest change since the dismemberment of their country from Hindostan. Encouraged by the liberality and indulgence of the Moguls they gave a loose to their pleasures and the bent of their genius. They appeared in gay apparel, constructed costly buildings...... The interests of this province were so strongly favoured at the Court (at Delhi) that every complaint against its Governors was attentively listened to and any attempt

to molest the people restrained or punished." From this it becomes abundantly clear that the treatment of the Afghans towards Kashmiris, the vast majority of whom were Muslims was really very harsh. The Kashmiri Muslims were never enlisted in the army and in the civil administration too the Kashmiri Muslims had very little hand. It was held an established rule in the Afghan Government to refuse admission of a Kashmiri to the army.[1] The army of Kashmir during this period consisted of about three thousand horse and foot who were mainly Afghans. They were seldom paid regularly and sometimes the arrears consisted of even two years' pay.[2] Sometimes for want of better subsistence they lived on water nuts.

The province yielded a revenue of about 20 to 30 lacs of rupees out of which a tribute of about seven lacs was remitted to the Kabul treasury.[3] But this account was seldom utilised in any beneficent projects. The Mogul gardens were lying in ruins excepting Shalimar garden, which was well looked after. Magnificent Mogul palaces near Hari Parbat hill were mere heaps of ruins. The palaces were dismantled and the stones and other material were used for unimportant purposes. Taking into consideration the decline in trade and commerce a

1. Forster's Travels.
2. Ibid.
3 Ibid.

revenue of about thirty lacs was indeed very exhorbitant. Revenue from shawl industry alone was computed at twelve lacs of rupees. "The price at the loom of an ordinary shawl was from eight to twenty rupees according to the quality of its work, though shawls worth a hundred rupees were also manufactured. Best paper in the East was manufactured here and a wine 'resembling that of Madeira' was produced here which possessed excellent quality. Essential oils from roses were held in great estimation and yielded an yearly income of more than a lac of rupees. Of the minerals iron of an excellent quality was found here. There were other industries which on account of lack of encouragement were languishing."[1]

At other place Forster says that "the rupee is the current coin of Kashmir and that struck in Moradabad in Rohilcund is held in great estimation. From the baseness of the silver a large discount is allowed on that of Kashmir. Copper money of the value of a half penny and cowries, a small marine shell compose the other currency of the Province."

Forster has many harsh words for the Kashmiris. But in spite of all that he has had to say in their condemnation he has had to admit that even during those days

1. Forster's Travels.

of wanton cruelties and despotism "the Kashmiris are gay and lively people with strong propensities to pleasure. None are more eager in pursuit of wealth......or who devise more modes of luxurious expense. When a Kashmiri even of lowest order, finds himself in possession of ten shillings he loses no time in assembling his party and launches into the (Dal) lake and solaces himself till the last farthing is spent. Nor can the despotism of an Afghan Government which loads them with a various oppression and cruelty, eradicate this strong tendency to dissipation, yet their manners it is said, have undergone a marked change since the dismemberment of their country from Hindostan."

The lot of the Kashmiri Pandits when compared to other people was indeed happier. Though at times they were very harshly treated, yet the political power was generally and largely centred in their hands. The local bureaucracy was manned by them and some of them were employed in offices even at Kabul. Some others engaged themselves in trade and commerce and did good business both at Kabul and Kashmir. Whenever they found political firmament overcast with adverse clouds, they at once hurried to Kabul where they were always very well received, and stayed there till the return of better times. Along with this they had acquired a spirit of adventure

which carried them in all parts of India: from Mir Jaffar's Bengal to Nizam's Haiderabad in the South, the Kashmiri Pandits had made their home everywhere. Moorcraft who came to Kashmir in 1822 A. D, found the Pandits as highest officers in petty Muslim principalities between Kabul and Kashmir. At Kathai, he found a Kashmiri Pandit, Nidhan Kabu, with a huge Tilak mark on his forehead, in charge of the administration in the principality. Even in the trans-border tribal areas there were Kashmiri Pandits. Forster while going to Kabul in 1783 A. D. was held up by a band of Afghan marauders near Dicka a border district of Afghanistan when a Kashmiri Pandit came to his rescue. Forster says "Not finding anything of value on my person they were proceeding to treat me with violence, when a Hindu of the family of the Diwan of Kashmir (Pandit Dila Ram) who had known me in that country interposed his good offices and proposed a ransom for my releasement. This generous Hindu exerted so much warmth in my behalf and spoke so urgently to those marauders that one of them gave a severe blow on the face. He did not however desist and by an active perseverance and supported by a small sum of money, he accomplished his purpose."[1]

The social system of the Pandits was

1. Forster's Travels'

peculiar to themselves. They had evolved their own customs and a ritual very rich in detail for their guidance in matters pertaining to marriages and Yagnopavit ceremonies. These customs were followed by them all over India and even now these customs are followed with a slight variation. They never married outside their caste and seldom ate food prepared by a non-Pandit. But inspite of this isolationism in social matters, they fully imbibed the spirit of times. They used even in their private communications Hejiri era month and dates which were in use then and always carried their seals with themselves wherever they went. The religious functions they performed according to Hindu calendar.

The scholarship of the Pandits in Persian reached its high watermark during this period. They wrote exquisite poetry in Persian and were master writers in prose. Munshi Bhawani Das stands preeminent amongst the prose writers of the day. So also Lachhi Ram Saroor who rose very high at the Court of Nawabs of Oudh mainly because of his high poetical merit. Rai Rayan Anand Ram Karihalu was a great favourite of Shah Alam II and a great poet. He was a great Persian and Arabic scholar. So also Pandits Taba Ram Turki (1776 A.D. to 1847 A.D.), Sat Ram Baqaya, Pandit Daya Ram Kachru (1743 A.D. to 1811 A.D.) Aftab Bhan, Gobind Kaul, Kailas Dar (died 1772

A.D.) Lasa Kaul, Deva Kaul, Thakur Das, Gopal Dar (1735 A.D. to 1798 A.D.), Raja Kak Dar, Rugh Nath Kaul (1735 to 1807 A.D.) and many others. The contributions made by them to Persian literature have elicited the significant remark from competent critics that in the mastery of the Persian language the Kashmiri Pandits were second only to the Persians. About Pandit Anand Ram Karihalu it is remarked that his mastery of Arabic and Persian was so complete that even amongst the Muslims nobody could compete with him. Pandit Birbar Kachru (1789—1859 A.D.) to whom reference has been made in these pages has written a voluminous history of Kashmir. He has dealt with social and economic conditions of the people in a very detailed and lucid manner. Pandit Anand Ram Pahalwan has carried the History of Kashmir by Narain Kaul from 1712 A.D. to 1785 A.D. Birbar Kachru, besides being a historian, wrote good poetry as well.

The Kashmiri Pandits of this period were very orthodox in religion, but that did not cripple their minds. In outdoor life they behaved and described themselves as any other citizen would do. The use of words like Banda, Bandai Khas, Bandai Dargah, Ahqar, Ibn etc. with their names would show this. Not only that. They offered sometimes their prayers also in Persian language, and prefixed even their Gods with

such epithets as Hazrat etc. Thus in a writing of 1155 Hejiri (1742 A.D.) we find "Banda hai gulamani Hazrati Sharda Devi Bhawani Barai Qadmbos wa Gusul Dar Kurukshetra Raseed." They had indeed eagerness to have a dip in the holy tank at Kurukshetra, but did not hesitate in using expressions and style which were not strictly of an orthodox type.[1]

Kashmiri Pandit of those days freely entered military service. They found their way into Mahomedan, Marhatta, Sikh and English armies. For instance in various writings we find:—

(a) Bandai Dargah Rupchand Parimoo Sakini Kani Kadal dar Amli Nawabi Zain Khan Bahadur (2) Anand Ram Valoo hamrahi Lashkari Zain Khan Bahadur dar Risalai Qassim Khan (3) Mehar Chand Kaul Sakini Bagdaji Minmahlati Rainawari hamrahi Lashkari Zain Khan Bahadur.

(b) Banda Rupchand (2) Bhawani Das (3) Heeraman Pandit (4) Sada Kaul hamrahi Lashkari Mohammad Said Khan

1. Kashmiri Pandits in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by the author.

Note: The writings referred to here are to be found in an old Bahi of the Panda of Kashmiri Pandits at Kurukshetra. It is customary for a pilgrim to write about his arrival in the book maintained by the Panda.

Bahadur Rustam Jang Bahadur.

(c) Narain Pandit Sapru (2) Vishinath Pandit Sapru (3) Zind Ram Kaul, Hamrahi Lashkari Sidique Beg Khan Bahadur.

(d) Thakur Das Pandit Sapru (2) Fateh Chand Kaul (3) Sobha Shanker (4) Gopinath Chhachabali (5) Pandit Daya Ram walad Zind Ram. This gentleman bore the title of a Raja.

(e) Raja Sahib Ram Kaul (2) Banda Bishnath and (3) Bhawani Shankar hamrahi Lashkari Murshid Zada Ifaq Nawab Momamaduddoullah.

(f) Pandit Gangaram Bath hamrahi Lashkari Ambajee.

(g) Bandai Dargah Ram Narain Kaul uruf Kharu hamrahi Babujee Scindhia Bahadur.

(h) Heera Kal Zutshi hamrahi Buhl Sahib kidar Aqbi fauji Lake Sahib rawana shuda bud.

(i) Kishen Chand Kaul hamrahi Lashkari Fraser Sahib.

(j) Ajudhianath, hamrahi Thomas Metecalfe Sahib.[1]

With a few exceptions, all these gentlemen mention their residence in Kashmir. Here or there we come across with a Kashmiri Pandit who puts down his residence

1. Kashmiri Pandits in the 18th and 19th centuries by the author.

as Shah Jehanabad etc. None of them used Srinagar as their residence. The name Srinagar had fallen into disuse and the city was described by the name of Kashmir. The name Srinagar was revived by the Sikhs after many centuries.

In this period also Kashmir fully maintained her fame for Sanskrit learning. Shri Sundara Kantha a great saint was a profound Shaiva philosopher. His disciple Shri Shivopadhyaya has written a learned and a lucid commentary on Vijnana Bhairva which is a treatise discussing 112 forms of meditation. It is written in the form of a dialogue between Bhairava and Bhairavi. Shivopadhyaya lived in Kashmir during Sukh Jiwan's reign (1754 A. D. to 1762 A. D.) Reference may also be made to Pandit Sahib Ram who was a great Sanskrit scholar. His profound scholarship has elicited highest praise from many European scholars ànd his works have been referred to by many students of history.

There have been yet many other Kashmiri Pandits and Panditanis who have made collosal contribution to Kashmiri poetry. To mention only two of them reference may be made to Pandit Parmanand and Shrimati Arini Mal. Pandit Parmananda's poetry is primarily devotional saturated with religious mysticism. But he was not a believer in asceticism or aloofness from the world's

cares and anxieties and responsibilities, though his primary aim in life has been to seek the "Supreme Bliss." In one of his poems, he says:—

"Seek first the supreme bliss, O Parmananda,
Then play fresh parts on life's stage, in rags
of freshness clad.........."

In an another poem of his, Parmananda is more explicit. Says he:

"In this nine windowed and
three storeyed house,
The mind looks out now through
this gate now that;
Make fast the smallest outlet, hold him in;
Then seek the ethereal skies within.
There shines,
Eternal Sun who by unborrowed light,
Illumines the worlds—who rises not
nor sets,
The burning breath of love will set
all things
Ablaze, like oil will water feed the flame,
The Ego melt to naught—that state is God.
The holy Sanctum seen, one need not be
Confined within, for God who lives
enshrined
In peace within, in Beauty shines without.
Throw open all sense gates and let the mind
Move freely in or out at its sweet will—
It can't alight where there is aught
but God."

[Translation by Pandit Zinda Kaul, popularly known as "Masterji"]

Shrimati Aranimal was the wife of Munshi Bhawani Das, an erudite Persian scholar to whom reference has been made in these pages more than once. Her lyrics are masterpieces in Kashmiri language and the word pictures of delicate sentiments drawn by her are so vivid, real and charming, that very few Kashmiri poets have reached the standard set by her. Some of her poems have been set to music and are sung even now by Kashmiri ministrels with great interest and gusto. Some of her poems have been translated into English by Principal J. L. Kaul, a cursory study of which is enough to establish the poetical genius and mastery of technique achieved by that unlettered woman.

Before bringing this review to a close reference may be made to a fact which would go a long way in proving the breadth of outlook and vision possessed by Kashmiri Pandits of this period. We have witnessed during this period a number of Shia Sunni riots, but not a single riot has taken place in which the participants were the Kashmiri Pandits. That the Kashmiri Pandits never gave a cause for grievance to any other community so as to provoke it to a riot, must go a long way in the eyes of any fair-minded critic to establish

the cosmopolitan and broad outlook of the Kashmiri Pandits, though at the same time it may be mentioned that in their steadfast devotion to their own religion the Kashmiri Pandits were second to none in this world. But this taught them to respect other religions in an equal manner which in its turn gained them the devotion and friendship of an overwhelming majority of their own countrymen and others. This paved the path for their rise in all branches of life to great heights. And this secured them an abiding place in History.

CHAPTER XXV

Sikh Rule and the Kashmiri Pandits

THE Sikhs found the affairs of the country in a terrible mess, but they themselves too did not contribute any constructive effort to ameliorate the lot of the people. The chief aim of the Governors who were deputed from Lahore was to amass as much wealth as was possible, and with this money they bought their immunity from the wrath of the Sikh ruler—Maharaja Ranjit Singh who manifested his concern on more than one occasion over the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. After the conquest of the country by the Sikhs, Misr Dewan Chand remained in charge of the country's administration for a few months. But the things went from bad to worse. Dewan Chand had all the qualifications of a great General but he lacked those qualities which could make a successful administrator. Misr Dewan Chand was summoned back. He reached Lahore and presented a sum of rupees twenty-five lakhs to the Maharaja and thus secured his immunity. He was succeeded by Dewan Moti Ram, a man of genial temperament and a peace-loving disposition. Pandit Birbar Dar was put in charge of the revenue administration. Birbar conducted himself

with great ability and tact with the result that Maharaja Ranjit Singh was highly pleased with him and on the occasion of the Dussehra festivities sent him a costly present of a *Chauga-Kalgi* - a pearl necklace and a gold bracelet, etc.[1] It was during Moti Ram's regime that an attempt was made by some Sikh Generals to destroy the mosque of Shah Hamdan, but it was at the intercession of Pandit Birbar Dar that the intention was given up.[2] Whatever the fate which later on betook Pandit Birbar, this incident is enough to show the catholicity and the prudence of the Pandit. A smaller mind with no eye on the future would certainly have seized this opportunity as God-sent. But Birbar struck a different and more harmonious note. Moti Ram too, in spite of his virtues, could not effect an improvement in the administration. The result was that after a brief period of a year he was replaced in 1820 A.D. by Hari Singh Nalwa, the famous Sikh General. Pandit Birbar remained in charge of the revenue administration. Not long after Ranjit Singh expressed his desire to meet the prominent notables of Kashmir. In pursuance thereof, Pandit Birbar Dar, Birbar Razdan, Sahaj Ram Dar, Mirza Pandit and Khwaja Munawar Shah and many others including Pandit Nidhan Kaul (the writer's father's

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

great grandfather) left for Lahore. On reaching Daulatnagar the party was overtaken by cholera and Mirza Pandit Dar and some others fell victims to it and died. Pandit Birbar Dar and his surviving companions proceeded towards Lahore and gained an audience with the Sikh ruler. The Maharaja was highly pleased with the regularity of the accounts which were presented to him by Pandit Birbar Dar. An elephant, a pair of golden bracelets and a Khillat was given to him. Laden with these gifts and honours Pandit Birbar Dar and his party came back to Kashmir.[1] He reached Kralpura (a suburb of Srinagar) where was present for his reception Ganesh Pandit Dar, who was a son of Pandit Sahaj Ram Dar, and a near collateral of Pandit Birbar himself. But Birbar received him with indifference, and passed an order after some time for the resumption of the villages which were granted to Ganesh Pandit on Mustajari basis. Ganesh Pandit Dar, a chip of the same block, could not take this insult lying down. He went to the Subedar Hari Singh, and related to him the whole episode. Hari Singh expected that Pandit Birbar would pay him a visit before proceeding to his own house which was at the farthest end. But Birbar Dar, though he passed the house of the Subedar, did not enter there on the ground of the in-auspiciousness of

1. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

the hour. Hari Singh's suspicions roused by Ganesh Pandit were confirmed and the result was that their relations became strained. Birbar was dismissed and even a charge was brought against him that he had entered into a conspiracy with the Muslim hill chieftains for the overthrow of the Sikh rule.[1] Birbar was summoned to Lahore. Ganesh Pandit Dar was appointed in his stead and his brother Pandit Ramjoo was appointed as the Administrator of Kamraj. The charge of conspiracy though proved false to the entire satisfaction of the Sikh ruler, yet Pandit Birbar could not regain his lost glory and prestige. During these very days reports poured in to the Sikh ruler that Hari Singh on account of his repressive measures which he had adopted against the people had lost their confidence. He was replaced by Moti Ram who was appointed as Subedar a second time. With the deputation of Moti Ram, Birbar Dar also secured permission to go to Kashmir. But not long after his relations with Moti Ram also became embittered. Moti Ram sent him to prison and confiscated all his movable property on the plea that he had made embezzlements in the Sarkari moneys. Not long after Birbar died in custody—a strange irony of fate that the person who made it possible for the Sikh ruler to occupy the

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.

country and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of the administration should have died as a prisoner![1]

Diwan Moti Ram did not remain long in Kashmir on account of the untimely death of his son which unhinged his mind so much that he proposed renouncing the world. His successor Chuni Lal committed suicide when he was summoned to Lahore to explain his inability to collect the revenues. Chuni Lal's successor Diwan Kripa Ram was a man of luxurious habits who was always out on trips to places noted for their natural sceneries. The regime of Kripa Ram was not at all happy. Both man and nature robbed it of its peace. To crown the misfortunes which the people had to undergo as a result of severe earthquakes and cholera, Raja Zabardast Khan of Muzaffarabad backed by almost all the hill chieftains raised the standard of revolt against the Sikh rule, and greatly harassed the Sikh troops. Ganesh Pandit Dar was specially deputed to deal with the newly risen menace. Without firing a single shot the Pandit managed the whole affair to the entire satisfaction of the Sikh ruler.[2] He by his consumate diplomacy created a division in the enemy's ranks. The hill chieftains deserted Zabardast Khan, who

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. Ibid.

left alone had no alternative but to throw himself at the mercy of the Pandit who took him with himself to the Subedar.[1] The Subedar having received from Zabardast Khan costly presents for the Sikh ruler allowed him to go after leaving a hostage behind. This was a signal service which Ganesh Pandit rendered to the Sikh ruler. He now rose very high in the estimation of the Maharaja who, as will be presently seen, employed him on many an enterprise which involved a great deal of trust on behalf of the Maharaja and tact and ability on the part of the Pandit. Bhiman Singh Ardali now became the Subedar in 1831 A.D. He also appointed Ganesh Pandit Dar as his Chief Minister.

Bhiman Singh did not remain in Kashmir for more than a year, but even this one year witnessed no better days and in particular there broke out a terrible Shia-Sunni riot, which entailed huge miseries on the Shias. Ganesh Pandit dealt with the situation with consummate skill and soon succeeded in restoring the cordial relations between the two communities. The majority of the Shawl factory owners were the Shias. Their ruin would have been the precursor of a greater ruin to the Sunnies, who were generally factory workers. Relief and rehabilitation of the

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq

Shias was necessary and this was done by Ganesh Pandit without any loss of time.[1]

Bhiman Singh was followed by Shahzada Sher Singh, who was appointed as the Subedar of Kashmir in the year 1832 A.D. He was accompanied by Basakha Singh as his Assistant. But soon after there took place some events which embittered Basakha Singh's relations with the Prince. In the meantime Pandit Suraj Bhan who was a Kardar apprised the Darbar of a revolt on the Ladakh side which was backed by petty Rajas of the locality. Ganesh Pandit was deputed to deal with it. Ganesh Pandit Dar raised troops from the hill tribes and made for Iskardu at the head of an imposing force. He inflicted a crushing defeat upon the Raja of Iskardu.[2] The Iskardu Raja became a tributory to the Sikh ruler, and Ganesh Pandit was granted extensive Jagirs in lieu of his victory. Ganesh Pandit was now at the height of his glory. Sher Singh sought his help for ridding himself of the insolent Basakha Singh. The Pandit who himself did not favour the presence of an intruder went to Lahore and secured the dismissal of Basakha Singh,[3] who haveing fallen into disgrace secured his former position only after the payment of a huge sum.

1. History of Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Fauq, see also Hassan.
3. Ibid.

By this time the Pandits in Kashmir had come to the top in large numbers. This was inherent in the situation. The Sikh rule itself was an imposition from above. The Sikhs did not trust the Muslims, nor did the Kashmiri Muslims ever reconcile themselves to being subjects of the Sikh ruler. The petty Muslim hill chiefs were always on the war path, and though they could not withstand for long the great might of the Sikh ruler, yet the harassment they caused was by no means insignificant. The policy of the Sikhs in Kashmir was therefore to keep the Kashmiri Muslims fully and completely subdued so as to eliminate any chance of their rising. Some of the principal mosques which afforded a meeting ground for the people were either confiscated or closed for prayers. Even Azan—call to prayers—was stopped. This reminds one of the destruction of temples for similar reasons at the hands of Sikandar and Ali Shah, though there is no charge against Sikhs of having destroyed a mosque, excepting that once they expressed designs on Shah Hamdan mosque which they gave up at the intercession of Pandit Birbar. The cultivators were heavily taxed. They were left with no incentive for tilling the soil. Mismanagement that was rampant created famine conditions. And as a matter of fact, people died by hundreds and a devastating famine soon followed. Thousands left the valley and settled in the Punjab.

It is estimated that during Sher Singh's regime the population of the valley dwindled down to two lacs from eight. The administrators who were mainly in charge of policies were deputed from Lahore, but the local bureaucracy was mainly manned by the Pandits. These Pandits had powerful supporters at the Lahore Court, where a number of Kashmiri Pandits held very prominent places of trust and honour. Maharaja Ranjit Singh tried on more than one occasion to set the matter right by punishing the delinquents, but as he himself shared the belief that the stability of the rule in Kashmir depended upon the spirit of the people of Kashmir being in complete subjection, even he could achieve no tangible results. The Sikh policy it seems was not to allow the growth of a rich class in Kashmir. In this they made no exception between the Pandit and the Muslim. Wherever a suspicion arose about the possession of wealth by some person it was taken from him in the shape of Nazarana (presents). During Sher Singh's regime, Nazaranas were recovered from the high class Pandits in the following manner:—

Pandit Suraj Bhan	...	Rs. 175000
Munshi Tilak Chand	.	Rs. 75000
Pandit Himat Joo Fotedar	...	Rs. 25000
Pandit Kanwal Bhan	...	Rs. 35000
Shankar Pandit Kotru	...	Rs. 15000
Chandra Pandit	...	Rs. 25000
Other Pandits—more than	...	Rs. 100000

Similarly Nazaranas were recovered from Muslim Shawl merchants.[1] The result was that most of such people—both Hindu and Muslims—shifted from Kashmir and settled in other parts of India and Punjab where they found themselves more secure and safe.[2] Jamadar Khushal Singh who was sent to assist Sher Singh proved a veritable engine of oppression for the people. The Maharaja soon recalled him, but even then the ruin of the country was complete. Pandit Chandra Bhan, a local Pandit, who was accused of having assisted the Jamadar in his unlawful activities, was arrested along with some other Muslims and Pandits. All these people were released only when they had purged themselves of their guilt by offering huge sums of money. Though the Maharaja received huge sums of money from Kashmir during this period, yet he could not allow the affairs to deteriorate to an irremediable extent. He had himself planned a visit to Kashmir, but changed his intention because of famine that had broken out in the country. It was time now that a new policy was introduced. Sher Singh was recalled and Colonel Mian Singh a man of a humane and just temperament was appointed in his place. Mian Singh reached Kashmir on 12th Chet 1891 Bikrami (1834 A.D.).

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1. Umadatul Tawarikh (quoted by Fauq)
2. Ibid.

CHAPTER XXVI

Pandits and the Later Sikh Rule

COL. Mian Singh turned a new leaf in the annals of Sikh Kashmir. On his arrival at Kashmir he found the affairs in a mess. Famine had impoverished the country in a very large measure. Cattle had perished by thousands. There was nothing left with cultivators to fall back. Mian Singh also appointed Ganesh Pandit Dar as his Chief Minister. Both the Pandit and the Colonel devised plans for the rehabilitation of the uprooted people. Food grains were imported from the Punjab and sold here at very cheap rates. Besides this, cattle, cocks and eggs were imported and distributed amongst the people free of cost. Even crows and pigeons were brought in. Dues from cultivators which had persisted against them from the Afghan times were written off. Ganesh Pandit made an assessment of land, and then distributed it amongst farmers, in an equitable manner. The result was that within two years the price of Shali per khirwar went down form sixteen rupees to one rupee. Besides this the judicial administration was also reorganized and was put under Pandit Raja Kak.[1]

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1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru.

Mian Singh next paid his attention towards ridding the country of lawless elements which were in main the result of unsettledness which prevailed during some past years. A number of people had organized themselves under the leadership of one Khaira, known as Galaban and were moving about the country-side on their swift steeds and carried fire and death wherever they went, and plundered the people of even their scanty belongings. Mian Singh dealt a crushing blow upon this group, captured a number of them and hanged them in public at Zaina-kadal Bridge. With the elimination of this group the high-ways in the country-side became safe for travel and trade and commerce began to flourish.

But the shawl trade which was the main source of the country's wealth was at a standstill, as most of the shawl weavers had during the recent famine migrated to such places as Amritsar, Ludhiana and Basohli in Jammu. In the Jammu province the weavers were very much encouraged by Maharaja Gulab Singh. Maharaja Gulab Singh had occupied Kishtwar which opened a shorter though a difficult route to Ladakh wherefrom the wool for shawls came. With the shawl weavers well settled in the Jammu Province, the Maharaja's attempt was to divert the raw wool direct to Jammu through his newly acquired district of Kishtwar. In this he succeeded to a considerable

extent. The result was that shawl industry of Kashmir was considerably damaged. Only a few years back there were about 22000 looms working which came down to not more than 2200.[1] The result was unemployment and consequent poverty. Col. Mian Singh tried to apprise Maharaja Ranjit Singh of this state of affairs, but due to the presence of Raja Dhyan Singh, the brother of Gulab Singh, who was the Chief Minister at Lahore, the information was kept back from the Maharaja. At last the Colonel in sheer exasperation sent a trusted servant with a letter and with this direction that he should deliver the letter directly in the hand of the Maharaja. This was done. The Maharaja expressed his great displeasure against Gulab Singh, with the result that some raw wool again began to pour into Kashmir. But Gulab Singh did not remain idle. Soon after Maharaja's death he led an expedition to Ladakh and occupied that district. With this conquest he became the master of wool and the industry developed in Jammu, though on account of climatic and other conditions the results were not as satisfactory as in Kashmir. But for the time being the industry was revived in Kashmir and the unemployment abated considerably. During this period many European travellers, English, French, and German came into Kashmir. They

1. History of Kashmir by Birbar Kachru

took shawls with them as gifts to their friends at home and by this means a fresh impetus was given to the shawl trade in the European market. This gave rise again to a rich commercial class which lived in great pomp and glory and possessed enormous wealth. All these achievements, which were by no means small or insignificant, were the result of the humane and just administrative policy introduced by Mian Singh and executed by Pandit Ganesh.

The news about the achievements of Ganesh Pandit did in course of time reach the Sikh ruler. He expressed a desire to meet the Pandit. Ganesh Pandit accompanied by some other Pandits such as Pandit Himat Joo Fotedar, the head of the Accounts Department, reached Lahore. Ganesh Pandit was very well received by the Maharaja. Accounts were presented to the Maharaja who was so much satisfied with their accuracy that he compelled Ganesh Pandit much against his will to take the responsibility for the Revenue administration of the country.[1] The Pandit was made to enter into a stipulation to make yearly payment of a certain amount into the State treasury out of the realizations made by him. After having stayed at Lahore, the Pandit returned to Kashmir not without receiving costly gifts, a Khillat and a Sanad from

1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.

the Sikh ruler. The Pandit discharged the fresh duties with great skill and honesty. He appointed Kardars with the duties of looking after cultivation of the land and realization of land revenue. With agriculture coming to normal, the land revenue also began to increase. Ganesh Pandit now earmarked a sum of Rupees three lacs out of the revenues received by him for payment to some Hindus and Muslims as Dharmarth and Mustamaris. This payment was to be made annually. By this means he created a strong party at his back and no wonder if the historian Hassan calls him as *Panditi Nek Akhtar.*

Ranjit Singh died in the year 1839. A.D. After his death pandemonium reigned supreme in the Punjab. Army now freed from the iron grip of the late Maharaja became all powerful. Rival factions sought the help of the army for their self advance, and made lavish promises to it. The Sikh army in Kashmir also showed signs of restiveness which in course of time broke into open rebellion. Both Ganesh Pandit and Col. Mian Singh tried to stem the tide of growing unrest but did not succeed. The result was that in spite of the Pandit, Col. Mian Singh was murdered by the insurgent soldiery, though the Pandit succeeded in saving the Colonel's son. But Ganesh Pandit himself died within a fortnight of the Colonel's death. The result

was that for some time the country fell into a complete grip of lawlessness and misrule. Ganesh Pandit left behind himself a son, Pandit Mahanand Joo. He was confirmed in his father's Jagirs and besides that adequate arrangements were ordered to be made from the Lahore Durbar for his education. Mirza Imam Vardi a famous scholar of Lahore was appointed as his teacher.[1]

After the murder of Col. Mian Singh a change was introduced in the policy of appointing Governers to Kashmir. Hitherto no Muslim was appointed, as Governor of Kashmir. But the lawlessness at Lahore had greatly weakened the military might of the Sikhs. In Kashmir. the Sikh army had made itself very unpopular by its unruly conduct. What was needed was to somehow secure the good will of the Muslims of Kashmir which might secure stability of Sikh rule in Kashmir. Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din a trusted servant of the Sikh State was appointed as the Governor of Kashmir in 1841 A.D. He appointed Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi as his Chief Minister.[2] The Jama Masjid which was kept closed for public prayers from the time of Dewan Moti Ram was now left open for prayers. This act of his went a long way in winning

1. Tarikhi Aqwami Kashmir by Fauq.
2. History of Kashmir by Hassan.

the goodwill of the Muslims. Having created a sound base for his regime the Sheikh dealt a crushing blow to the frontier Muslim hill chieftains who having taken advantage of prevailing turmoil had become semi-independent. Pandit Raja Kak Dar was appointed in charge of Kamraj—the northern province of Kashmir, which on account of the contiguity of the frontier tribal area required the vigilance of a skilful administrator. By such means the Sheikh introduced some life in the administration left dead on account of the disorder in Lahore. Both the Sheikh and his Pandit Minister laid two gardens which to this day commemorate their names. The garden known as Sheikh Bagh was laid by Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din and the other, known as Munshi Bagh, by his Pandit Minister, Tilak Chand Munshi. The cluster of chinars planted in Munshi Bagh in a well planned manner bespeaks even today the artistic sense of the Pandit.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din died in Kashmir and was succeeded by his son, Sheikh Imam-ud-Din who was then present in Kashmir. The younger Sheikh who also appointed Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi as his chief Minister will be remembered for long for his tactfulness with which he tackled the problems relating to shawl weavers. With small advances made to them by their employers, the shawl weavers

were reduced to the status of mere slaves. They could not leave an employer and work elsewhere, and their wages were very scanty and meagre. Imam-ud-Din freed them from the virtual slavery of their masters and further ordered an increment in their wages. Besides that it was ordered that State paddy be supplied to the weavers from the State granaries at a price which was less by two annas in a rupee The shawl manufacturers had now to give to the weavers a bonus of three percent from their profits. But in spite of his good intentions he was not destined to remain long in Kashmir. After a short stay of six months, the country was handed over to Gulab Singh as a result of the treaty between the Sikhs and the British Government.

CHAPTER XXVII

Kashmiri Pandits at Ranjit Singh's Durbar

IN our preceding chapters we have seen how the Kashmiri Pandits had begun an orderly migration from Kashmir eversince the Moghuls occupied the country. Some left the country willingly in search of "meadows and pastures new" and some were forced to leave the country by the exigencies of times. They spread over the whole of the Indian sub-continent. With the break-down of the Moghul Empire a number of kingships came into existence and the Pandits entered into services there. They went as far away as Bengal. Pandit Kidar Nath, an ancester of Hon'ble Pandit Ajudhya Prashad Kunzru, became the Diwan of Mir Jaffar. In these very days Pandit Sada Sukh (grand-father of Hon'ble Bishambar Nath) was in charge of Revenue administration in the Haidarabad State. So also in many other States. In the pandemonium which followed the breakdown of the Moghul rule in Kashmir, Pandit Kishen Das, an unknown Kashmiri Pandit, left his native place and reached Delhi. By dint of his high attain-ments in the Persian language he succeeded in carving a place for himself at the Moghul Court. He became there the nucleus of a small group of Pandits and wherever they

went they went in a body. He had a son by name Pandit Ganga Ram who rose very high at the Sikh Durbar. With the establishment of the Sikh rule in the Punjab, the necessity of regulating the finances of the State was keenly felt by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Having been apprised of the attainments of Ganga Ram in this branch, the Sikh Ruler invited him to Lahore. Till then there were very few Kashmiri Pandits residing at Lahore. Ganga Ram accepted the offer and moved in the year 1813 A.D. to Lahore with a number of Pandits, the chief amongst them being Raja Dina Nath, Daya Ram, Hari Ram, Gopi Nath, Ram Kishen, Ganga Bishen Gamkhar, Lachman Prashad etc. These and many others settled at Lahore and were prominently placed at the Sikh court. Pandit Ganga Ram having risen very high in the estimation of the Sikh ruler was appointed as the Finance Minister. After the death of Pandit Ganga Ram the mantle fell upon the shoulders of his friend and relative Raja Dina Nath, who had accompanied him to Lahore from Delhi, where one of his forefathers Rugh Nath had settled in the reign of Emperor Mohammad Shah. His father Pandit Bhaktmal also was employed at the Sikh court. But Raja Dina Nath rose to a higher place of eminence. He was put in charge of the Privy Seal by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the Maharaja, general disorder prevailed. The army became restive and then openly rebellious. Many

prominent Sirdars were killed and many princes of the royal blood were made to taste the bitter cup of an ignominous death. But in all this disastrous fire of misrule, if there was one man who came out unscathed, it was Raja Dina Nath alone. Not only that; his power and influence increased daily. It is recorded about him that when the political firmament appeared peaceful and happy, his discerning eye perceived the onward march of silent and invisible clouds which rained fire and disaster, after some time. He made his plans to tide over the difficulty long before the difficulty had made its appearance.[1] European historians describe him as Talleyrand of the Punjab, but in spite of the sting in the insinuation contained in the remark, he was very highly spoken of by the Europeans with whom he came into contact. The amount of recognition which they gave to his great power and influence can be gathered from the fact that he was one of the signatories to the treaty which was concluded between the Sikhs and the British after the First Sikh War. Later on a council was constituted in December 1846 for the governance of the Punjab and Raja Dina Nath was made its President, with the active support of the British.[2]

With Raja Dina Nath in saddle,

1. Punjab chiefs by Griffin.
2. Mashahiri Kashmir by Fauq.

hundreds of Kashmiri Pandits migrated to the Punjab from Kashmir. He became the rallying factor of all these fresh imigrants and invariably helped them to careers. In course of time Pandit colonies sprang up both at Lahore and Amritsar. In view of the fact that Raja Dina Nath and other Kashmiri Pandit notables had succeeded in winning the confidence of the British conquerers, the latter meted out to them great encouragement, and made them recipients of many posts of trust and honour which were till then kept closed to Indians.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh had modelled his army on European plan. There were many French Generals serving in his army, chief amongst whom being Ventura and Allard. Ventura was in charge of the Maharaja's Fauji-khas which was considered to be the flower of the Sikh army. He was assisted by a Kashmiri Pandit, the son of Pandit Ganga Ram by name Adjutant General Diwan Ajudhya Prashad.[1] Ajudhya Prashad showed considerable skill in handling military matters. During Ventura's absence on leave, Ajudhya Prashad was placed in full command of the Fauji Khas and during this time he led successful military expeditions against the Raja of Mandi and other refractory hill chieftains. After his return from France, Ventura paid a glowing tribute to the military

1. Mashahiri Kashmir by Fauq. See also Punjab Chiefs by Griffin.

genius of the Pandit, and remarked that he had found the troops in a better spirit than when he had left them in charge of the Pandit. After Ventura's final exit, Pandit Ajudhya Prashad was placed in independent command of these troops.

There is no use in multiplying names of the persons who were prominent at the Sikh court. But even then there is one person whose mention would not be out of place here. We mean Col. Badri Nath. He migrated from Kashmir during the Afghan rule, and got enlisted as a sepoy in the Sikh army. He gradually rose to the rank of a Colonel. He was second in command to General Hari Singh Nalwa when the latter wrested Peshawar from the Barakzais.[1]

But the Sikh Empire was a short lived affair. Circumstances cropped up which ended the Sikh rule in the Punjab for all time.

1. Panjab chiefs by Griffin.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Kashmiri Pandits under Dogra Regime

WITH the defeat of the Sikhs in their war against the British, Kashmir came into the possession of Maharaja Gulab Singh under circumstances which have been so often discussed that no detailed reference need be made here except that the Sikhs having failed to pay a war indemnity of Rupees seventy five lakhs the Province of Kashmir was taken from them and given over to Maharaja Gulab Singh in lieu of this sum. Gulab Singh became the first Dogra ruler of the country in the year 1846 A. D. There were many Kashmiri Pandits at the top then who managed the affairs of the country with considerable ability. But with the advent of Maharaja Gulab Singh a number of the Punjabis—notable amongst whom were the Diwans of Emanabad—came into the country. In his chequered career during which Gulab Singh saw many disappointments and also the fulfilment of many ambitions including the possession of Kashmir, he was greatly assisted by a Khatri gentleman belonging to Emanabad whose name was Diwan Jwala Sahai. It is said that it was this gentleman who arranged money which the Maharaja had undertaken to pay the British in lieu of Kashmir. It was natural that he

and his own followers rose very high in the estimation of the Maharaja. Jwala Sahai became the first Prime Minister under the Dogra rule, and this office was to remain in his family in perpetuity. He was granted extensive fiefs and besides a certain portion of the State revenues. The Diwan was astute enough in his line. He aimed at the creation of a Punjabi Hindu ruling class in Kashmir on whose loyalty he or his successors could place implicit faith. The result was the in-coming of many Punjabis, who received great encouragement at the hands of the Emanabadi Diwans. Extensive land grants were made in their favour and they were placed on many places of trust and power. Besides this, the commerce of the country also passed into their hands. The Kashmiri Muslims were not much in the picture politically, though in the economic field they were a force. Now came the turn of the Pandit. With the immigration of waves of the Punjabi settlers the Pandit found himself gradually thrust to the background, though the process was slow. The Dogra Hindus who were a brave people by themselves were thrust solely into the army and were kept ousted almost entirely from the civil administration. But more of it later on.

When Gulab Singh reached Kashmir, Pandit Tilak Chand Munshi a Kashmiri Pandit, was the Prime Minister. He had

to make room for the Emanabadi Diwan who, as already stated, put his own men on the key positions. With Pandit Tilak Chand thrown out, other Pandits also were ousted from office. But the village administration remained mostly in the hands of the Pandits. They maintained the village records and acted as village school masters.

Gulab Singh had learnt a great deal in the school of adversity. In settling the affairs of Kashmir, he fully drew upon his immense experience. He resumed the Jagirs which were granted to favoured people by previous rulers. He adopted further measures which raised the revenue collection and also freed the country from lawless elements. The resumption of Jagirs created a great deal of resentment amongst the Jagirdars. Representations were made to the Indian Government. A commission under an Englishman was sent to Kashmir to inquire into the allegations. Pandit Rajkak Dar who commanded a great deal of local influence and to whom reference has been made earlier, helped the Maharaja to tide over the difficulty and even succeeded in taking a favourable verdict from the commissioners. Pandit Raj Kak was appointed as the Governor of Kamraj, but after a short time he was placed in charge of Shawl department. He raised the income of this department from four lacs to twelve lacs.. The shawl weavers whose wages were in

consequence reduced went on strike. This is perhaps the first attempt of the working class in India to stage a strike. But the workers lacked leadership and were a disorganized lot. Their agitations were easily crushed, though at one time a demonstration staged by them was dispersed with the aid of the military, when a number of people fleeing from the military fell into a stream below while crossing a bridge which gave way under them. Pandit Raj Kak was thereafter placed in charge of the whole province for some time and a distant cousin of his Pandit Mahanand Joo Dar was appointed first as the Governor of Kamraj and then as officer-in-charge of the Accounts Department. Mahanand Joo was later appointed as the Governor of Jammu. But on the whole the Kashmiri Pandits were imperceptibly receding to the background. Governors who had considerable powers then, were deputed from Jammu, and they brought their own men with themselves and placed them at key positions. Trade and commerce, both export and import, was snatched away from the Kashmiris and it became a sole monopoly of the Punjabi Khatris who now began to come in larger numbers and settled in Kashmir.

Gulab Singh died in the year 1857 A.D. and was succeeded by his son Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Gulab Singh's successor proved himself a sagacious ruler who not only

consolidated the State but became responsible for many reforms which he introduced in the State. During this period another section of the Kashmiri Pandits now made their appearance on the scene. The Kashmiri Pandits who had migrated to India during previous regimes now began coming back to Kashmir. But during their absence from their country which extended over a period of more than a century, they had changed beyond recognition. Their dress, and their language was non-Kashmiri, though they had clung to their customs and traditions with a pertinacious tenacity. Diwan Badri Nath who belonged to the family of Raja Dina Nath, was first to appear on the scene. He was appointed as the Governor of Kashmir. With him came a number of outside Kashmiri Pandits. But they maintained socially a certain amount of aloofness from the local Kashmiri Pandits, though inter-marriage was practised to some extent and common customs were followed.

We have seen in out preceding chapters that Shawl trade was quite in a flourishing condition during the previous regimes. But during the Dogra regime due to causes over which nobody had control, the industry was well-nigh ruined. The shawl was much prized in Europe. Even Queen Victoria had made a rule to present a shawl as a wedding gift to any princess of royal blood, and thus its use came into vogue in

England. But its chief market was France and the French traders used to depute their agents to Kashmir directly from France. The defeat of France in 1870 A. D. in Franco-Prussian war spelt ruin to the industry and almost all the shawl magnates were ruined. The result was that there was universal unemployment in the towns and great resentment in men's minds. The shawl industrialists were mostly Shias and the weavers Sunnis. Many people who could not understand the force of world events held the Shias responsible for closing down the factories and the result was a Shia-Sunni riot, in which the Shias suffered most, and so also the Sunni notables who were suspected by the Government of being at the back of the Sunni rising against the Shias, This also worked against the revival of the industry. There was yet some hope of its revival but then there broke out a terrible famine which continued for three consecutive years (1876 to 1878 A. D.). A good many Shawl weavers left the country and settled at Lahore, Amritsar and Ludhiana.

The deputation of the French agents to Kashmir brought the Kashmiri Pandits face to face with European culture and literature. Hitherto their literary pursuits were limited to a knowledge of Persian and Sanskrit but now with fresh opportunities at their disposal, they began to study French and other European languages. Pandit Ram Joo Dar who was

then the Diwani Mâl, learned some French, Latin and English, but being an influential member of the community who did not like the other members of the community sharing this fresh knowledge with himself he discouraged and dissuaded people from, acquiring a knowledge of these languages. But in spite of his discouragement which in essence meant pushing the hands of the clock backwards, it did not yield any appreciable results.

Reference has just been made to the famine of 1876 A.D. It was a terrible famine which shook the whole structure of the society to its very basis. Thousands of people fled from the country and settled in various parts of India. The population was reduced to one half. Maharaja Ranbir Singh took various measures to alleviate the sufferings of the people. But the sufferings were acute and so also the resentment in men's minds was great. The Pandits suffered with the rest of the people, though their sufferings were not so great as that of the other people. But they had other grievances. Politically they were being cast to the background. Sensitive amongst them could not tolerate this easily. But far from getting any redress they became victims of intrigue and suspicions. As ill-luck would have it, a number of famine stricken people were being carried across the Wullar lake to some adjoining

villages. These boats got capsized in the middle of the lake and many people were drowned. As generally happens in such cases, the rumour went round that the Government not being able to sustain the burden of feeding so many hungry mouths drowned them in the lake. Somebody laid a complaint with the Government of India about this drowning and laid the blame for this tragedy upon the Kashmir Durbar. The Government of India deputed a high officer for preliminary inquiry in the matter. Suspicion turned upon an influential Kashmiri Pandit by name Pandit Hargopal Kaul who had recently come back to Kashmir after having passed his early life in the Punjab, where his services were most often made use of in political assignments by the British authorities. Hargopal came back with fresh ideas and assumed the leadership of the rising middle class in his community. The Maharaja was himself of the belief that the complaint was lodged by Hargopal and was the outcome of British intrigue. The Maharaja had his own reasons to suppose so. He had withstood all the overtures of the British Indian Government, for affording them a foothold in the country. Only a limited number of European visitors were allowed in the country and they could not remain in the valley for more than a specified period of time. Christian missionaries too were positively discouraged if not actually banned. Trade facilities also were

denied to the Europeans This naturally made the Maharaja suspect that the Britishers had a hand in the complaint which he believed was lodged by Pandit Hargopal. After a preliminary inquiry, the officer deputed by the Government of India, made a report about the baselessness of the complaint and left the matter to be decided by the Maharaja. Hargopal behaved in a very brave manner in the whole episode. He inquired of the British officer in the open Durbar as to who was his prosecutor and who was his Judge and being informed that it was the Sirkar, he said that it was a queer justice that one and the same person should act both as the judge and the prosecutor. The Maharaja it is said, lost his temper and would have done physical violence to the Pandit, but he was prevented from doing so by his courtiers. But that did not end the matter. Pandit Hargopal and his brother Pandit Saligram were interned in the Bahu fort in Jammu province. But the brothers proved of a sterner stuff and it was not long before both the brothers fled from the fort and reached the adjoining British territory of Sialkot. A newspaper was started by them there which took a very strong line of criticism against the Kashmir Durbar. But the brothers were only after a few years pursuaded by the Durbar to come back which they did.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was indeed a very wise ruler. The development schemes which he inaugurated are even now yielding fruit. He had a full fledged development Ministry under whose guidance many past industries were, either revived or new industries started. He started the Silk factory and planted mulberry trees all over the valley, the leaves of which are so very necessary to rear the silk worms. Shawl industry was revived, and a brewery which produced best wines and stocd competition with choice French wines and Scotch whiskys was started. This brewery was later on closed under pressure of the British Government. The army was about forty five thousand strong and was very ably generalled by Dogra and Gurkha officers. This army proved its mettle in Gilgit and Ladakh compaigns. The terms of command were all in Sanskrit. A Research Department was also started. In all this he was very ably assisted by his able Prime Minister, Diwan Kripa Ram, who was a son of Diwan Jwala Sahai. Diwan Kripa Ram has produced a report on Kashmir valley in 1870 A.D. which can even now be read with great benefit. The report contains a well-ordered treatment of all the subjects which concern the valley. In producing this report he was assisted by a number of Kashmiri Pandits.

Maharaja Ranbir Singh died in the year 1885 A.D. He was succeeded by his

son Maharaja Pratap Singh. With his accession to the throne, the British Indian Government changed its former policy of non-interference and deputed for the first time in the history of the State a Resident in Kashmir. Some veiled charges like that of treason having been brought against the Maharaja, he was virtually deposed by the Government of India and in his stead a council was constituted to carry on the Government of country. Raja Pandit Suraj Kaul a Kashmiri Pandit of Lahore was appointed as the Revenue Member of the Council. The deposition of the Maharaja created a furore in the length and breadth of India. The press in India notably the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* and Akhbari *Am* of Lahore (an influential vernacular paper of Lahore owned and edited by Pandit Gopi Nath Kaul a Kashmiri Pandit) took up the Maharaja's cause. Pandit Vid Lal Dar who later on became his private secretary bore him constant company during this period of gloom and interceded on his behalf with high British officers and public men including the members of the Parliament. The Maharaja's powers were restored partially, but the Council continued functioning though now under his Presidentship. Pandit Suraj Kaul took up the work of land settlement. Sir Walter Lawrence was appointed as the Settlement Officer and under him worked a number of Kashmiri Pandits. These Pandits were deputed to such far-flung places as Gilgit, Chilas, Gupis,

Iskardu, Ladakh etc. for the purpose of effecting land settlement and assessment works. The means of communication were almost non-existent and the mountain paths were most unsafe. There they went on mere pittances, and braved great dangers and suffered untold troubles. All these places bore contiguity to frontier districts and besides being quite unsettled, lawlessness was rampant everywhere and marauding bands from across the border were constant visitors. Some of these Pandits were abducted by tribals across the border and many more died on account of the rigours of an unsuitable climate. But after all a land settlement was effected. In Muzaffarabad district Pandit Mahanand Joo prepared an assessment report which is even now known as Khewat-i Mahanand Joo and has been judicially recognised as a reliable document It was by such sacrifices and sufferings that the Pandits contributed to the consolidation and settlement of the State.

During Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign certain reforms were introduced in the administration. Municipalities were constituted and a college was established at Jammu. Pandit Daya Kishen Kaul—a Kashmiri Pandit from Lahore—who was Maharaja's Private Secretary, took a keen interest in starting a college at Srinagar with private effort. Till then very few Kashmiri Pandits had received modern education with the result

that with the introduction of English in the central offices they found themselves unfit for any positions in the Central Administration. With the formation of the Council which was wholly manned by people from the neighbouring province of the Punjab, waves of office-hunters from outside moved towards Kashmir. They got employment in almost every central office. All the important positions came to be occupied by them and even in subordinate offices they found place in large numbers. These outsiders opposed giving higher education to the people of the State. One of the members of the Council made a proposal that no college should ever be opened in Kashmir, as it would be unwise to impart higher education to the people of a frontier province. But as it has already been seen one of the members of the Council Raja Suraj Kaul was a Kashmiri. His father had moved down to Lahore in the closing years of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's reign. He had his relations in Kashmir and with his influence some local Kashmiri Pandits, received some encouragement. A good number of outside Kashmiri Pandits were also encouraged to come back. His son, Pandit Daya Kishen Kaul, opened correspondence with Mrs. Annie Besant and pursuaded her to open a college here. Soon after a college under the name, of Sri Pratap Hindu College was opened at Srinagar. The local Kashmiri Pandit boys joined the college in large numbers.

During all these years the Muslims were not much in the picture. The policy of the Government of India was to keep the Muslim peasantry more or less contented but under control. As already stated, a regular land settlement was effected. Their holdings were guaranteed to them. But little encouragement was given to them in the field of education for fear that they might become conscious of their political rights. Due to Franco-German war of 1870 the Muslim commercial class was ruined beyond hope. The result was that the leadership of the Muslims went into the hands of obscurantists and reactionary priests who also meted out greatest discouragement to their taking to Western education. Things went on in this manner when a local Maulvi by name Maulana Rasul Shah who was imbued with some progressive ideas, realised that without modern education the Muslims will always remain backward. He founded an association and under its auspicies a Muslim Secondary school was started In this he was greatly helped by some outside Muslims who were in State service. The teachers appointed in the beginning were mostly Pandits. In the first Council which was constituted under the British guidance after Maharaja Pratap Singh's virtual deposition, there was no Muslim member in the Council. But when some powers were restored to the Maharaja, the Council was re-organized and a Muslim member was also included

in it. And since then Muslims, though mostly outsiders, also began being appointed to Government posts. These Muslim officials encouraged Maulvi Rasool in his efforts, but the local Muslims under the leadership of fanatical priests raised a tempest and even attempts were made on the life of Rasool Shah. But the School soon became a High School, and Muslims began attending the school in large numbers, but the Pandit boys had gone much ahead of them.

The Pandits fully availed of the fresh opportunity afforded to them by the opening of a College. And the first batch of their graduates came out in 1911 A. D. The Government at the helm meted out a positive discouragement to them. A struggle was the result which took the shape of Kashmiri Pandits versus the outsiders. The people of the Jammu province also were meted out the same fate. True, that they found an opening for themselves in the army, but the outside element in the administration, which was both powerful and predominent stood in their way of getting a foothold in the civil administration. There at Jammu the struggle sprouted forth into Dogra versus Punjabi controversy. The Punjabis were by far in a favourable position. Throughout Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, the Prime Ministers and the other ministers including Heads of Departments came generally from the neighbouring province of the Punjab.

In the struggle which ensued the outsiders had the upper hand.

In Kashmir the British officers encouraged the Pandits and even sided with them in their struggle against the outsiders. The Pandits were enlisted in very large numbers in all the departments, headed by British officers. The outsiders were generally Arya Samajists with which was the name of Lala Lajpat Rai connected. They had their connection in tact with their home province and whenever they came from there even after a brief sojourn, they came laden with fresh ideas. This was an anathema for the Britisher and hence his partiality for the Kashmiri Pandit. A deputation of the Jammu people waited upon the Maharaja and exhorted him in strong terms to safeguard the rights of the state subjects. The Residency also backed up this demand of the people. The result was that a definition of the state subject was formulated in 1912 A.D. and an order was promulgated that only the subjects of the State should be recruited to state services. But the definition was so loosely worded that it afforded little relief to the people and the resentment amongst the educated classes went on increasing daily. In the early twenties, the resentment took the form of an agitation. The present writer and Pandits Shankar Lal Kaul, Jia Lal Kaul and Jia Lal Jalali—all of them fresh from the College—

started an agitation through the outside press for securing the rights of the state subjects. The present writer organized public meetings and held conferences both at Srinagar and Jammu , under the auspicies of the Dogra Sabha. A sort of vague nationalism was taking root in the minds of the educated people and in face of the common outside menace the educated classes both of Jammu and Srinagar felt a sort of a common kinship. The Jammu Dogras held a big political conference and elected the present writer to preside over the conference. A batch of Pandit delegates attended the Jammu conference and the educated lower middle class youths who were mostly Hindus of both the provinces founded a common platform for the ventilation of their grievances. During the closing years of Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, Maharaja Hari Singh came into prominence He sided with the people and under his guidance a committee was constituted which framed a definition of the state subject which is still in force. This was the result of the agitation which the educated classes started and in which the Kashmiri Pandits took a very leading part.

Maharaja Pratap Singh died in the year 1925 A. D. and he was succeeded by Maharaja Hari Singh. The youthful Maharaja made some good though in a way dramatic gestures. He delivered a speech soon after his ascending the Gaddi and declared

that his religion was "Justice" and all that. He attended the Muslim prayers on the occasion of 'Id'. By such means he tried to make addition to his popularity which he had gained with the educated classes as a result of the part played by him in framing a state subject's definition. But as regards real power, he flatly refused to share it with anybody, least of all his subjects. He even dispensed with a Prime Minister and himself acted as such. But his choice of the high officers and of the Ministers was not a happy one. All these fellows, unused as they were to handling any serious situation cut a sorry figure when a crisis arose. These were the days when the whole of India was pregnant with very great revolutionary potentialties. Though there was no freedom of press or platform in the State, yet a stir was clearly visible in the whole State excepting in the powers that were. The movement went underground. The present writer and a number of educated Pandit young men along with a Kashmiri Pandit journalist, Pandit Gwash Lal Kaul, wrote extensively to outside papers and issued hand written and sometimes cyclostyled posters in which the short-comings of the ruling junta were discussed threadbare. This went on for some time, till contacts were established with workers in other Indian States. The Punjab Riasti Praja Mandal representing the popular movement in the Punjab States was the result, of which the present writer

became afterwards as its General Secretray. There were some Kashmiri Pandits at Lahore, the chief amongst whom was Pandit Kashyap Bandu who establised a Labour Board at Lahore to look after the interests and welfare of Kashmiri labourers—all Muslims—who used to migrate to the Punjab to work during winter months. A big conference was organized at Lahore in which Pandit Kashyap Bandu, and the present writer and a number of Kashmiri Pandits participated. In fact the organisers of this Conference were all of them Kashmiri Pandits. The Conference was presided by Pandit Peary Mohan Dattatriya a Kashmiri Pandit of Delhi, who was then on the editoriial staff of the Tribune Lahore. This Conference created a stir in the Government circles and for the first time a sort of a Publicity Department was established to put the Government case before the world and meet the criticism levelled at it. It was during these very days (1929 A. D) that Municipal elections were held at Srinagar on a joint electoral basis without reservation of seats. The present writer was opposed by a Kashmiri Pandit candidate with a solid Government backing. Yet he was returned with a thumping majority, the Muslim voters having voted en-bloc for him. The Government now tried to woo the Congress leaders. Late Shree Jamna Lal Bajaj and Shri Jai Ram Das Daulat Ram came to Kashmir in connection with the All-India Spinner's

Association. This Association with which was connected Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad who later became the Prime Minister and who received his first political training and nationalist inspiration from it, was doing very commendable work. These two congress leaders were received well by the Government officers, especially by Pandit P. K. Wattal (an outside Kashmiri Pandit) who was the Finance Minister and was believed to have progressive nationalist ideas. A favourable impression was created in the minds of the two leaders who spoke publicly in praise of the administration. But the present writer invited them and a number of leading Kashmiris to his place, and gave them a true picture of the conditions obtaining in the country and requested them not to bestow praises on the administration in the Indian States. It had its desired effect.

The Government changed its tactics. The ruler was advised by his political minister who was a Britisher not to ignore the growing opposition. By such means they hoped to rob the opposition of its sting. The present writer, though quite a youngster—when compared to the other members, was nominated as a non-official member of a Retrenchment Commission that was set up then. It was the first time that a non-official was associated with the task of handling State business. The Commission finished its work and the present

writer received a letter from the ruler in which his work on the Commission was greatly praised and highly spoken of. It was whispered to the present writer that—proposal was made for his appointment in the Political Department of the State. But soon after (1930) Mahatma Gandhi was arrested. On that day a huge procession headed by the present writer and some leading Pandits like Shiv Ji Khuda, Shamboo Nath Ogra etc. was carried out through the city of Srinagar and at its termination a huge bonfire of foreign cloth was held at Maharajgunj. This procession was participated in by the Kashmiri Pandits in thousands. though the Muslims generally refrained from joining it. The procession created a deep wound in the heart of the representatives of the British Government in Kashmir. Their friendliness towards the Kashmiri Pandits ended and they tried to find other supporters.

1930 A. D. is a record year in the annals of Kashmir. It was the year in which for the first time in the history of Kashmir a political procession was carried out in Srinagar. It was the year when Mr. S. M. Abdullah came back after having finished his education at Aligarh. As already stated, the Muslims who were educationally very backward, did not participate in the political demonstrations mainly organized by the Pandits. Their leadership was vested either

in some high Muslim families with a definite feudal outlook or the obscurantist and reactionary Muslim clergy. There was no educated Muslim middle class yet born though some Muslim youngmen had received higher education. But they were only hunting for a job here or there and were by themselves a disorganised lot. They had a grievance that the Government insisted only on merit for Government services and did not take note of the fact that they belonged to a backward community and as such needed encourangement. They interpreted all this as a trick to keep them back from entering into Government services. As a counterblast to all this they demanded jobs on population basis. The agriculturist classes too which include a high percentage of the Muslims were also very resentful. The post-war crash of 1929-30 was having its effects upon Kashmir also. The prices of crops had gone down considerably. To make some more income many Muslim peasants started going abroad to the neighbouring provinces of the Punjab for getting some work. There they went every year in thousands and scattered themselves all over the Punjab. Their living conditions there were very deplorable. They lived in slums and many amongst them died of malaria every year. There was no arrangement made by the Government to look after their interests, though a Labour Board to which reference has already been made, was created

with non-official effort. But that too achieved no great resuls. The result was general discontent. It was when conditions were of such a character that Mr. S. M. Abdullah arrived in the country. He had seen the first civil disobedience in full bloom. His sensitive mind could not but be impressed with the general conditions obtaining in the country. He was offered and he accepted a petty job of a teacher with very meagre emoluments, but he devoted his time mainly in the organization of his people. Left to itself the Kashmiri movement would have taken a nationalist complexion from the very beginning. But Kashmiri Muslims movement drew inspiration from politics as it was in vogue in the province of Jammu. The latter province was strong in the grip of the Punjab communalism whose powerful waves swept over the whole of the Jammu province. Overtures were made by the Jammu Muslim leaders to the Kashmir leaders and a united Muslim movement with its ramifications all over the country was the result. The Pandit nationalists found themselves in the wilderness and their Muslim colleagues who in the changed circumstances were powerless to achieve anything real or substantial retired from the field. The result was that a movement which was mainly political and economic in essence took the shape of a communal movement. Not only that. The Muslim communalists of the Punjab who were basking

under the bureaucratic sunshine of the British regime now came forward and organised a Kashmir Conference at Lahore and greatly influenced the decisions of the Kashmir movement. Hindu communalists also came out with their communal demands as an answer to the Muslim movement. The result asw Hndu-Muslim tension all over the State. To meet the situation the Maharaja appointed Pandit Harikishen Kaul, a retired commissioner of the Punjab as Prime Minister. In Kashmir the Pandit movement was led by Pandit Kashyap Bandhu and the present writer and was greatly kept within nationalist bounds. Both of them, in spite of differences kept their contacts with Mr. S. M. Abdullah and Mr. Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi, which robbed the communalism in the country of much of its fury. The conditions soon settled down. After the situation was further eased, the Maharaja asked the various communities to submit their demands as they were called then. The present writer was elected their spokesman by the Kashmiri Pandits who in this capacity submitted a memorial to the Maharaja regarding their demands. In the memorial the Pandits, unlike any other community in the State, stated unequivocally that "Consistently with our culture and the tradition of our community both here and outside the State, we cannot look on things through communal glasses. It was the proud boast of the great Pandit

Moti Lal Nehru that his mind could not run in communal channels. This sums up, we believe, the position of the average Kashmiri Pandit on communal matters. Long before the Musalmans of Kashmir had become politically conscious, it was Kashmiri Pandits who fought for modernism in the administration. It was they who first demanded a legislature, a free press and a free platform. They cannot today go back on their nationalism, and repudiate these and other essentials of good Government. Recently they have not been so vocal on political reform, but the reason is that the Musalmans have presented their claims avowedly on communal grounds and for communal ends. Kashmiri Pandits are as anxious as any other community for the introduction of constitutional Government, but they are equally anxious that the body politic should not be corrupted by the canker of communalism"........ Soon after the Muslims organized their All State Muslim Conference and so did the Pandits. The first conference of the Muslims was presided over by Mr. S. M. Abdullah and the present writer was elected to preside over the Pandit Conference. The Pandits from all over the country came to participate in the Conference which made it an imposing affair. Mr. S. M. Abdullah also attended this Conference. When the present writer was reading his address, Mr. Abdullah was so much impressed

with the nationalist sentiments found therein, that he picked up a garland and jumped on the rostrum and garlanded the present writer. The seed of nationalism was again sown. But it took some time more before the seed fructified. The country remained in the grip of a communal movement for about six years. But in the meanwhile an assembly was inaugurated, which in spite of the fact that it had very little power, did at least one good, that it provided a common meeting place for the representatives of different communities and regions. There in the Assembly the members sometimes forged a joint front in which the present writer and Pandit G. R. Kabu who also was a member, participated. This went a long way in easing the political situation. Meanwhile contacts between the Muslim and Pandit leaders grew thicker day by day, and joint public meetings began being held which were addressed by both the Pandit and Muslim leaders. There was a stir in all the Indian States at that time. This stir was clearly visible in Kashmir too. A joint demand known then as "National Demand" was framed. Through this a demand was made for some political reforms as a first step towards responsible Government. The demand was treated slightingly by the then Government. The result was an agitation which was participated by both the Pandits and Muslims. Sheikh Abdullah and all the prominent leaders of the Muslim Conference

were arrested and sentenced to varying terms of imprisonment. About a thousand people were thus jailed, including a hundred Kashmiri Pandits (like the present writer, Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, Pandit Shyam Lal Saraf, Dr. Peshin, Janki Nath Sapru, Pandit Janki Nath Zutshi, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz etc.) After their release a special convention of the Muslim Conference was held, under the Chairmanship of Mr. G. M. Sadiq and it was formally converted into National Conference. Thus was National Conference born. But here we stop. What followed is a matter of recent history in which the present writer has also played his humble part. It would be indeed embarrassing for the present writer to discuss facts that form quite recent history.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, it might be noted here that during this period also Kashmiri Pandits were culturally quite alive. The torch of Sanskrit learning was kept burning by such eminent scholars as Pandits Sahib Ram, Dama Kak, Daya Ram Shastri, Raja Kak, Mahanand Joo, Har Bhatta Shastri, Professor Nityanand Shastri, Natha Ram Kala, Mahamopadyaya Makund Ram and last not the least Pandits Jagaddhar Zadu and Madhusudhan Kaul. Pandit Madhusudhan Kaul is a great research scholar, who has edited with critical annotations and comments a number of ancient Sanskrit classics which have won for him

universal recognition and fame. So also Pandit R. C. Kak. He too is a great research scholar and is responsible for bringing Kashmir on the archeological map of India. He has besides editing many ancient Sanskrit texts written a monumental book namely "Ancient Monuments in Kashmir." Pandit Anand Kaul Bamezai has also written a lot on the ancient arts and culture of Kashmir. Reference may here be made to Pandit Suraj Kak Mattoo who was a man of culture and a great social reformer. It was during Dogra period that Kashmiri literature came to be seriously studied by scholars. Principal Jia Lal Kaul and Professor S. K. Toshkhani two great scholars have unearthed a huge mass of Kashmiri literature which lay buried in some forgotten nooks and corners of old houses. A good portion of this literature has been rendered into English by them. It were they who for the first time invented a scientific script of the Kashmiri language. Pandit Raja Kaul Arzbegi was a great poet who wrote exquisite poetry in Persian. Even during his life-time, his fame travelled even to Persia. Pandit Hari Kaul, Pandits Vid Lal Dar, Badarju etc. have also composed good verses in Persian language. Kashmiri language too has received enough attention during this period. Pandit Krishna Razdan of Vanpoh was a great poet who has produced quite a mass of poetical literature in the Kashmiri language. Some of his works have been translated into a

number of European languages. His depth of thought and the rythamic flow of words set in cadenced beautiful rhyme mark him out as a versifier of a very high order. Lal Lakshman of Kulgam is also a poet of great merit, who has written many poems in the Kashmiri language. To say the least about him, he is a master of satire, which is at once pungent and spicy, sweet and tasty and replete with humorous thrusts and witty sallies which throw into bold relief the weaknesses of the society at large or those of an individual. There are yet others who may for want of space be left alone.

CHAPTER XXIX

Kashmiri Pandits in British India

The rise of British power in India, thanks to its superior organization and diplomacy, led gradually to the breakdown of the Mogul and Marhatta Empires. As a result, the country came to be divided into a number of small principalities which sprang up upon the debris of these once magnificent Imperial structures. In the South Haidar Ali founded an independent State in Mysore, and the breakdown of Peshwa's ascendancy led to the formation of a number of Marhatta States. Asaf Jah installed himself as an independent ruler of Haidarabad Then there were the Rajputana states, and cis-Satluj Sikh States such as Patiala, Jind, Faridkot Nabha etc,— the other Sikh Misls having been liquidated by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The chaos was so general and the breakdown so complete that even European adventurers such as Sombre tried to establish small states here or there. And Sombre did establish one near Delhi in Sardhana where his wife Begum Samru a Kashmiri Muslim girl who later became a Christian ruled as a semi-sovereign for long. In Bengal the British installed a person of their choice, Mir Jaffar by name, on the throne left vacant by Sirajuddowlla. In almost all these States there were Kashmiri

Pandits though their role may not have been such as may be called historical. But there they were, at such far off places as Bengal in the East and Mysore in the South. Pandit Ganga Ram who later rose very high at the Sikh Durbar was a great dignitary at Gwalior. It was from there that he migrated with a number of Pandits and later settled at Lahore on the invitation of the Sikh Ruler. Some of them were in Tippu Sultan's Mysore; and in the small principalities of Central India the administration was controlled and carried on mostly by the Pandits. And when the British established their direct rule over the country, they found the Kashmiri Pandits almost everywhere in charge of the lower branches of administration. The British left them at their posts and even meted out great encouragement to them. Their attitude towards this community can be summed up in the words of Mr. George Cempbell who says: "The Kashmiri Brahmins are quite high Aryans in the type. Their features are very fair and handsome, with high chiselled features and no trace of inter-mixture of the blood of any lower race. It may be partly race and partly occupation but they have certainly a great refinement and regularity of feature....... *They rule by the brain and the pen and not by the sword* It is this character that has gained them the favour of so many rulers of a different faith. Kashmir long belonged to the Kabul King-

dom, but it was never in any degree colonised by the Afghans.... The fact seems to be that the valley never belonged to the Afghan nation, but was always retained as a crown appanage of the kings who were very jealous of admitting into it subjects whom they might find it difficult to turn out again *and much preferred to govern through the Pandits*.........As a body the Pandits excel in acuteness the same number of any other race with whom they come in contact".[1]

With such an opinion formed by the British about the Kashmiri Pandits it was but natural that the former should have extended their unstinted support to them. The Pandits' knowledge of Persian and Urdu was of a very high order and they had taken to the study of English language much earlier than many others With the reorganization of courts, they came to be appointed in subordinate Judiciary and many amongst them entered the legal profession, from its very start and became the recipients of highest posts in the Judiciary *and were the first Indians to be appointed to such posts.* Mr Justice Shambu Nath whose father Sada Sheo had migrated from Kashmir in the closing years of the 18th Century was born at Calcutta in the year 1820 A. D. and was appointed as a Judge of the

1. Ethnology of India

High Court of Calcutta in 1862 A. D. He was the first Indian to be appointed as the Judge of a High Court.[1] So also was another Kashmiri Pandit Mr. Justice Ram Narain Dar who was the first Indian to be appointed as a Judge of the Punjab Chief Court. In United Provinces where theKashmiri Pandits had settled in large numbers the leadership at the Bar was for years held by them. To name just a few we might refer to the Hon'ble Ajudhya Nath Kunzru, the Hon'ble Pandit Bishamber Nath, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, Bar-at-Law Pandit Jagat Narain Malla, Pandit Brij Narayan Chakbast, Rt. Hon'ble Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, Pandit Kailas Nath Katju, Pandit Janki Nath Chak and lastly the great Pandit Moti Lal Nehru.All these gentlemen were great nation-builders and took a very prominent part in building the National movement. In the Punjab Pandit Sheonarayan Shamim retained the leadership of the Bar for a number of decades. He was a great poet, a great social reformer, a great student of music and a great Budhist scholar to which faith he held allegiance. Even in recent time there has been a galaxy of eminent Kashmiri Pandit Judges such as Mr. Justice wanchoo Mr. Justice S. K. Dar Mr. Justice Kichlu, Mr. Justice Sapru, Mr. Justice T. N. Mulla, Mr. Justice A. N. Malla Mr. Justice P. K. Kaul Mr. Justice R. K. Kaul etc.

1. Mashahiri Kashmir

It would not serve any useful purpose to multiply names excepting for the purpose of showing the extent of official rise of this community. In the Punjab, Raja Narendra Nath and Raja Hari Kishen Kaul retired as commissioners. Raja Narendra Nath, a great landowner and a grandson of Adjutant General Diwan Ajudhia Prashad, took part in politics after his retirement and was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and was appointed as a Minister. Raja Hari Kishen was appointed as Chief Minister of the Jammu and Kashmir State at a very troublous period of its history. Sir Ganga Ram Kaula, Pandit Brij Lal Nehru, rose very high in the Audit and Accounts Departments. Sir Ganga Ram is a direct descendant of Prabha Kaul who was wrapped in a mat and thrown into Dal Lake to be drowned there along with a number of Pandits under orders of Mir Hazar Khan, the Afghan Subedar [1] in 1792 A.D. But he was saved and fled to India. After having reached the highest rung in the official ladder Sir Ganga retired, and was afterwards appointed as the Chief Minister of Jind State where he served as such for about eleven years. Pandit Manmohan Nath Kaul whose services were lent to Kashmir Durbar was appointed as Governor of Kashmir. Apart from the settlement work which was achieved under his supervision in 1901

1. See page 204 supra

A. D. he was a great social reformer. It was he who introduced modern ways of living in the local Pandit population. There is hardly a state in India where at one time or the other a Kashmiri Pandit was not appointed as a Diwan. For instance, Sir Pandit Daya Kishen Kaul was the Chief Minister of Patiala State, Sir Sukhdev Prashad Kak Diwan of Jodhpur, Dharam Narayan Haksar Diwan of Sailana State, Pandit Ram Chandra Kak Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir State, Pandit Brij Mohan Nath Zutshi Diwan of Ratlam State, Pandit Maharaja Narain Sheopuri Dewan of Datia State etc. There were other Pandits who were appointed as Ministers in many states, suce as, Pandits Col. Sir Kailas Narayan Haksar (Gwalior), P. K. Wattal, (Kashmir,) Radha Krishen Kaul (Kashmir), Diwan Gyan Nath administrator at Nabha, Tribhuwan Nath Sopori (Udaipur), Amar Nath Atal (Jaipur), Narendra Nath Kaul (Kashmir) etc. The last named was a great administrator who solved the problem of the distribution of food grains in Kashmir in a most rational and scientific manner. His name is a byword in Kashmir and the magnificent institution known as Food Control Department built by him and which has stood the test of more than three decades is a living monument to his greatness.

How so ever high positions the Kashmiri Pandits may have achieved in the

administration of the country, yet all this pales into insignificance before the magnificent role that they played in building the **National Movement.** Their urge for freedom their patriotic fervour and singleminded devotion to the cause of their country has carved a place of honour for them in the History of India. It was in the year 1885 A. D. that National Congress was founded. Many Kashmiri Pandits associated themselves with the Congress from its very inception. Even before its birth Pandit Ajudhy-Nath Kunzru started a paper, Indian Herald, in 1879 A. D. which adopted a strong nationalist policy. Ajudhya Nath was a brilliant advocate of his time. He was treated with great consideration and respect by the officials, but he lost caste with them the moment he gave expression to his nationalistic views. Undaunted by official frowns, he went ahead, and joined the National Congress. The fourth session of the Congress was held at Allahabad in 1888 A. D. All sorts of impediments were placed in the path of the organizers of the session by the officials and their non-official supporters. But nevertheless a strong Reception Committee with Pandit Ajudhya Nath as Chairman was formed. Pandit Ajudhya Nath roused the people with his fiery eloquence. He was ready "to hold the Congress at any cost, wholly at his own expense, if necessary.[1]"

1. Sixty years of Congress by Satyapal and Probohbhadrai

Pandit Ajudhya Nath had an abundant store of wit and humour which served him well at the most crucial point. He had started a tour of the Provinces for collection of funds for the Allahabad session. The officials and their supporters, side by side with abuse and opposition began to hurl ridicule on the organizers. The Pandit was making an appeal for funds at Agra when oppositionists sent a small boy with a pice to the rostrum, where the boy presented the pice to Ajudhya Nath as a contribution to the Congress. Along with this they shouted and jeered at the Pandit. But Ajudhya Nath at once thundered out that the country was bound to be free where patriotism had found room enough even in the heart of a small boy who having got a pice from his mother offered it to the nation. The pice was put to auction and fetched a few thousands of rupees. He was elected to the U. P. Legislative Council and was a fellow of both the Calcutta and Allahabad universities. He was proposed for the presidentship of Nagpur Congress but before he could preside he was taken seriously ill and breathed his last in the year 1892 A. D. at the age of fifty two years.

There is yet another great Kashmiri Pandit, a close collaborator with Pandit Ajudhya Nath whose contribution to the building up of the Congress movement in

its early years has been in no way small or meagre. His name is Pandit Bishambar Nath, a prominent Advocate of Allahabad. He joined the Congress soon after its formation and was elected as the Chairman of the Reception Commitee on the occasion of the second Congress session at Allahabad, held in 1892 A. D. On the opening day of the session Pandit Bishambar Nath was taken seriously ill and was advised complete rest by his doctors and friends, but unmindful of his own health and the advice of friends, he attended the session and delivered a very learned address which was greatly appreciated and applauded by the audience. He was elected to the Viceroy's Legislative Council and continued there for a number of years. The depth of his popularity can be gauged from the fact that his return was always uncontested. His Council speeches were brilliant pieces of advocacy characterised by a spirit of fearlessness which should have been unthinkable in eighteen ninety's. After the conviction of Lokmanya Tilak in 1898 A. D. for sedition, the British Government wanted to fight the growing political unrest by further drastic changes in the Penal and Criminal Procedure Codes. Pandit Bishambar Nath in his speeches reduced the arguments on the Government side to smithreens and succeeded largely in curbing the mischief that was sought to be done. Pandit Bishamber Nath was proposed for the presidentship, of the Lahore

Congress in 1900 A. D, but he refused the honour for reasons of health. He died in the year 1907 A. D. The torch of national service was kept incessantly burning by other men, though small in stature belonging to this community, when we come across with another Kashmiri Pandit by name, Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar, Bar-at-law, who joined the congress with the dawn of the twentieth century. He is the first Kashmiri Pandit to have gone to England for higher studies. Orthodoxy in religion was at its highest then amongst the Kashmiri Pandits and when he came back after having been called to Bar, a howl was raised by a section of Kashmiri Pandits all over India. There were some amongst them who were of the opinion that he could never regain his caste, even after very elaborate *Prayaschitam*, though the *Vivasthha* of the Pandits from Kashmir was that Pandit Bishan Narayan [1] could be taken back into his caste after due purificatory ceremonies. Pandit Bishan Narayan performed the purificatory rites, and was admitted into their fold by the advanced section of the community, but the more orthodox refused point-blank to have any truck with him.

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1 *Note:* Pandit Bishan Narayan belonged to the Dar family of Kashmir which has supplied many chief ministers during Mogul Afghan and Sikh rule in Kashmir such as Kailas Dar, Sahajram Dar and his son Ganesh Pandit Dar. Pandit D. P. Dar the present Deputy Home Minister of Kashmir is a direct descendant of Ganesh Pandit Dar.

They even nicknamed the advanced Pandits as Bishan Sabhais. For themselves they reserved the pompous title of Dharam Sabhais. There was a huge controversy and apart from any other thing, some very good poetry was the result. Pandit Rattan Nath Dar Sarshar, a Kashmiri poet of Lucknow, has composed some very beautiful verses, called by him as Masnavi in defence of Bishan Narayan. This first public appearance in which Pandit Bishan Narayan made a mark was in the year 1903 at the Madras Congress session, when he moved the resolution on Official Secrets Bill. While moving the resolution, Pandit Bishan Narayan said that "Lord Curzon is astonished that this should be described as Russianizing the administration. I am astonished that any one should be so imperfectly informed regarding the Russian Government as to think that it has got anything in its purely civil Laws so arbitrary and so disastrous to the civil liberties of the people as Lord Curzon's Bill when passed would be in this country". He was elected President of the Congress in 1911 which was held at Calcutta. As President of the Congress he delivered a brilliant address, every word of which breathed a deep sense of patriotism, though as a whole the address was moderate in outlook. No apology is offered to give a rather lengthy excerpt from his address:-

"The root cause of most of our misfortunes, which if not corrected, fore-

bodes serious disorders in the future, is the growth of an unsympathetic and illiberal spirit in the bureaucracy towards the new born hopes and ideals of the Indian people. While a new India has gradually been rising up, that spirit too has been growing and so a critical situation has arisen. The bureaucracy with its vested interests, its domineering habits, its old traditions of absolute and unquestioned authority, suspicious of knowledge, and averse to innovation like very close corporation, cut off from the people by its racial exclusiveness and wedded to a paternal system of Government under which it has so long enjoyed power and pelf but which is discordant with the more liberal ideas of the day, is antagonistic to the educated classes who are filled with new knowledge and are concious of their political rights. The Bureaucracy as a body has never been in sympathy with the new aspirations of educated India........

"In the pursuit of a high ideal we must not forget the difficulties that beset our path. Long and weary is the journey that lies before those who undertake to mould a people into the unity of a nation. Our agitation, in order to be effective, must be national, not sectarian, persistent not

spasmodic, directed by intelligence and wisdom, and not impulsive and reckless. India needs bold and enthusiastic character, not men of pale hopes, and middling expectations but courageous natives, fanatics in the cause of their country,

"Whose breath is agitation
And whose life a storm whereon they ride".

For such a type of leadership the country had not to wait for long. It was just within less than a decade that there appeared on the political scene some very dynamic personalities "whose breath was indeed agitation and whose life a storm whereon they rode". And it must have been a source of great satisfaction to the departed soul of Pandit Bishan Narayan that this type of leadership was provided by his own community.

Mention may here be made of another Kashmiri Pandit, Mr. Brij Narayan Chakbast, who was a great Urdu poet. Though primarily a poet, he was largely influenced by Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar who infused his own political fervour in him Pandit Bishan Narayan was himself a poet of great merit. Pandit Chakbast resolutionised Urdu poetry in so far as he made a departure

from orthodox standards which guided the course of Urdu poetry till then. He is the first Urdu poet who introduced patriotic themes in his poems, and kindled a passion for freedom in the minds of middle class youths in United Provinces. An ardent supporter of Home Rule, a famous line occurring in one of his poems. "We shall reject even Heaven if offered as an alternative to Home Rule" remained a slogan for long.

Pandit Bishan Narayan Dar died in 1916 A. D at an early age of fifty two. Soon after did Congress convert itself into a revolutionary body under the unique, unparalleled and unprecedented leadership of Mahatma Gandhi; and with it was a new era introduced in the politics of the country. At the very start of his great movement, Mahatma Gandhi was able to enlist the support of the great Nehrus whose part in building the national movement has been so great that it can be asserted as has been asserted by many without the least fear of contradiction that "the story of the Nehrus is the history of the Indian freedom movement itself". The elder Nehru, Pandit Moti Lal, was in the Congress much earlier than 1907 A. D. Speaking in general terms, he was then quite moderate in politics and was a bitter critic of the advanced section known then as extremists whom he described as mere talkers totally cut off from reality. He was

elected as the president of U. P Congress Provincial Committee and was present at Surat when a schism occurred in the Congress In short he was not new to the Congress when he later assumed its leadership though his earlier connections with it were that of a "moderate politician".

Mr C. F. Andrews who has credited Pandit Moti Lal as being "A maker of modern India" has described him in the following words:-

> "Kashmiri Brahmans, to which class Pandit Moti Lal Nehru belonged, are well known all over the north of India both for their intellectual powers and fine appearance. They are by birth, what may truly be called, an aristocratic race, and easily recognized as such. Moti Lal was typical of this distinguished class and in his old age he gained the reputation of being the "aristocrat of the Assembly". His spotless *Khaddar* dress, with his white Kashmiri shawl, suited him perfectly, and his portrait is rightly given the place of honour in his son's Autobiography. The fine features, which I have mentioned and the fair complexion run through the whole family and have descended from father to son".

Pandit Jawahar Lal has also drawn a portrait of the great Pandit in the following

words:-

"There was in him a strength of personality and a measure of kingliness. In any gathering where he was present he would inevitably be the centre and the hub. Whatever the place he sat at table, it would become, as an English Judge said later, the head of the table. He was neither meek nor mild. Consciously imperious, he created great loyalty as well as bitter opposition. It was difficult to feel neutral about him; one had to like him or dislike him. With a broad forehead, tight lips, and a determined chin he had a marked resemblance to the busts of the Roman Emperors in the museums in Italy. There was a magnificence about him and a grand manner, which is sadly to seek in this world of today".

For his magnificent deeds and achievements, collosal sufferings and sacrifices, Pandit Moti Lal has been quite rightly described as "the father of defiant patriotism" and the "first and foremost pillar of Gandism". Pandit Moti Lal is further described as a great freedom fighter "who transmuted the spineless leadership of the Indian Liberals into a death defying crusade of sterling independence". He was an ardent advocate of Hindu-Muslim unity. The Congress-League Scheme, the first conscious attempt at solving

the Hindu-Muslim problem was framed in his house in 1916 A. D. He was apparently very much satisfied with this achievement but his political beliefs were quite in keeping with the Moderate creed though signs were not wanting which pointed that a big change in the mind of Pandit Motilal was in the offing. And the change was soon seen. Afterwards what Pandit Motilal did and what he achieved is a matter of recent history - fresh in men's minds and need not be gone into here with any amount of detail. But it should be noted here that the massacre at Amritsar and the Martial Law atrocities iu the Punjab shook the very foundations of the faith on which his life was hitherto built. And when the call of non-co-operation came, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, he fully responded. No doubt he did it slowly, but did it deliberately realizing all the consequences which it involved. The change-over was not an easy one. Pandit Moti Lal's earnings were very huge and his generosity was equally great. His standard of living was very high. He had many European and Indian friends belonging to high aristocratic circles. To change all this for a life of poverty and privations and give up his huge lucrative practice at the Bar was indeed very difficult. But he did all this. Henceforth his soul did shine in its pristine resplendence and glory. Pandit Moti Lal went to jail many a time. He drafted a constitution for India - now known

as Nehru Report, almost single-handed. Twice he presided over the Congress. He organized the first regular opposition in the Assembly and as a leader of opposition and a parliamentary tactician he has not many parallels in the world. His burning patriotism can be gathered from his last political utterance when he said:

> **"Decide India's fate in Swaraj Bhawan decide it in my presence and let me be a party to the final honourable settlement of the fate of my mother-land. Let me die, if die I must, in the lap of a free India. Let me sleep my last sleep not in a subject country, but in a free country".**

Pandit Moti Lal presided over the Calcutta Congress in 1928 A. D. where a sort of ultimatum was given to the British Government that in case Dominion Status was not granted within a year, the country would switch off to independence. The next session of the Congress was held at Lahore under the presidentship of his illustrious son Pandit Jawahar Lal. It was a unique sight to see the father handing over the charge of the Congress to his son. Though Pandit Jawahar Lal was hardly forty, then, yet in the words of Mahatma Gandhi he "possessed dash of the warrior and the prudence of the statesman in whose hands nation was safe". Prophetic words these!—

subsequent events have fully shown that the nation has remained indeed safe in the hands of Jawahar Lal. As customary with it, the British Government failed to understand the spirit of times and refused to grant even Dominion Status within the year of grace, resulting in the Congress passing a resolution demanding full independence. The honour of raising the banner of independence at midnight of 31st December 1929 was reserved by an inscrutable Providence for Pandit Jawahar Lal. Thenceforth started Jawahar Lal's Jail going. Nine times was he imprisoned spending the best part of his life in jails. And when in 1936 there came about a temporary break in his jail-going (after having spent about five years in imprisonment) his friends and foes found him with greater vigour and freshness. Elections were soon in the offing. Pandit Jawahar Lal made an extensive all - India tour in shortest possible time, Wherever he went, he simply conquered. The polls were swept and Congress rule in eight provinces including the Muslim Frontier Province was the result.

II

Pandit Jawahar Lal's solution of the problems that have confronted the country has always been characterised bv a very bold and courageous approach. His thought has always been clear and his action therefore always effective. In matters of detail

Jawahar Lal may have sometimes compromised here or there but on matters of principle he has never given way. Hard prison life extending over years at a stretch did not diminish his rigid adherence to his principles of life even by an iota even though it meant at times huge suffering and sacrifice. His sixth terms of imprisonment which was quite a long term came to an end on 30th August 1933. Soon after in September of the same year Pandit Jawahar Lal in spite of the fact that his household affairs were none-too-happy—his ailing mother Shm. Swarup Rani, who herself had taken a very prominent part in the freedom movement and had even faced police batons was lying in the hospital, and his brave and noble wife Shrimati Kamla Nehru on whom had fallen the task of attending on Sh. Swarup Rani was herself unwell he found time to survey the Indian situation in such a bold, courageous and detached manner in his three articles entitled "whither India" which baffled both his friends and critics. Unmindful of the troubles which lay ahead, he posed and discussed the question as to what is the aim of our freedom movement in a very very bold and frank manner. Says he :-

"Is our aim human welfare or the preservation of the class privileges and the vested interests of the pampered groups? The question must be answered clearly and unequivocally by each one of us. There

is no room for quibbling when the fate of nations and millions of human beings is at stake. The day for palace intrigues and parlour politics and pacts and compomises passes when the masses enter politics. Their manners are not of the drawing room; we never took the trouble to teach them any manners. Their school is the school of events and suffering is their teacher. They learn their politics from great movements which bring out the true nature of individuals and classes and the civil disobedience mov - ment has taught the Indian masses many a lesson which they will never forget".

This would show the depth of his convictions before which everything including collosal sufferings and sacrifices paled into insignificance. And in all this he had always the blessiugs of his noble wife handy who even on death-bed encouraged him to follow the path he had chosen. Jawahar Lal was serving his seventh term, when the health of Shrimati Kamala Nehru deteriorated so much that he was temporarily released from Jail to be with her in her last moments. After eleven days Jawahar Lal was again taken back to Jail. Suggestions were made to him on behalf of the Government that if he gave even an informal assurance that he would desist from politics during the rest of his term he would be released to attend on Shrimati Kamala. While he was taking leave of Shrimati Kamala she whispered to

him "What is this, about your giving an assurance to Government? Do not give it". This small sentence by itself speaks volumes The true womanhood of India spoke through her. And what has been the result of all this? A free India and an India which daily goes higher and higher in world's estimation. For all this he has been the recipient of very high tributes from all who count. Some have described him as a great patriot, a fearless freedom fighter. Others have praised his high artistic sense, his great literary attainments and real knowledge of history. There are yet others who admire his high statesmanship, his unequivocal support to the principles of international peace and amity. There are many who describe him as a man of great decency with whom the most prized object in this world is full human dignity. And there are not a few who see in him the great upholder of high moral values and ethical standards, which are daily receding to the background in the world of today. Some look upon him as a political prophet who has predicted many world events including the second world war with such precision that it should put to shame all the astrologers, wherever they be.

All this is undeniable. But with regard to Indian freedom movement, his contribution has been in a way unique, It was he who for the first time in India provoked thought on right lines and cleared

the minds of the freedom fighters of cobwebs of doubt and confusion which reacted very adversely on their thought and activities. Gandhiji started his great Movement. The whole of India rose like one man. But very few knew as to what was the end to which the movement would lead. Every body had his own notions about the Movement and every body interpreted it according to his own light. Even Gandhiji did not encourage clear thinking on this matter. There is reason for this which may not be gone into here. Sir Valentine Chirol once in 1921 questioned Mahatma Gandhi in Anand Bhawan at Allahabad as to what was his conception of Swaraj; Quick came the answer from Mahatmaji that under Swaraj "the lion shall lie with the lamb". For the time being this might mean a lot, and yet mean very little. When once the things have settled down,—the question as to "for whose freedom did we fight" is sure to crop up then in its grim nakedness. It was after all left for Jawahar Lal to give a definite shape and form to the Indian freedom movement and pull it out of the thraldom of doubt and confusion. In his "Whither India" Pandit Jawahar Lal has posed this question with great clarity and precision. Says he :-

> "Again whose freedom are we particularly striving for, for nationalism covers many sins and includes many

conflicting elements. There is the feudal India of the princes, the India of the big Zamindars, of small Zamindars, of the professional classes, of the agriculturists, of the industrialists of the bankers, of the lower middle class of the workers. There are the interests of foreign capital and those of home capital, of foreign services and home services. The nationalist answer is to prefer home interests to foreign interests, but beyond that it does not go. It tries to avoid disturbing the class divisions or the social status quo. It imagines that the various interests will somehow be accommodated when the country is free. Being essentially a middle class movement, nationalism works chiefly in the interest of that class. It is obvious that there are serious conflicts between various interests in a a country and every law, every policy which is good for one interest may be harmful for another. What is good for the Indian prince may be thoroughly bad for the people of his State, what is profitable for the zamindar may ruin many of his tenants what is demanded by foreign capital may crush the rising industries of the country . Nothing is more absurd than to imagine that all the interests in the nation can be fitted in without injury to any. At every step

some have to be sacrificed for others..." Further on in the same pamphlet He writes:—

"India's struggle today is part of the great struggle which is going on all over the world for the emancipation of the oppressed. Essentially this is an economic struggle, with hunger and want as its driving forces, although it puts on nationalist and other dresses. Indian freedom is necessary because the burden on the Indian masses as well as on the middle classes is too heavy to be borne and must be lightened or done away with. The measure of freedom is the extent to which this burden is removed. This burden is due to the vested interests of a foreign government as well as those of certain groups and classes in India and abroad. The achievement of freedom thus becomes a question, as Gandhiji said recently, of divesting vested interests. If an indigeneous Government took the place of the foreign Government and kept all the vested interests intact, this would not even be the shadow of freedom. Swaraj or freedom from exploitation for the masses is not a fine paper constitution or a problem of the hereafter. It is question of here and now of immediate relief. Roast lamb and mint sauce

may be a tasty dish for those who eat it but the poor lamb is not likley to appreciate the force of the best of arguments which points out the beauty of sacrifice for the good of the elect and the joys of close communion, even though dead, with mint sauce."

The pamphlet is concluded with the following passage:—

"Whither India? Surely to the great human goal of social and economic equality, to the ending of all exploitation of nation by nation and class by class, to national freedom within the frame work of an international co-operative socialist world federation. This is not such an empty idealist dream as some people imagine It is within the range of the practical politics of today and the near future. We may not have it within our grasp but those with vision can see it emerging on the horizon. And even if there be delay in the realization of our goal, what does it matter if our eyes look steadily in front. For in the pursuit itself of a mighty purpose there is joy and happiness and a measure of achievement."

Upto the September of 1933, this

type of language was certainly unheard of. The articles which constitute the pamphlet created a stir in the whole of Asia and these were translated into many Asiatic languages. In India too it certainly created an unprecedented ideological revolution. But all this was a bitter pill for the British rulers. As hinted earlier by the "Statesman" he was soon arrested and sentenced to a long term of imprisonment.

It is indeed impossible to recount the achievements of Jawahar Lal in the short space available, but yet a brief reference to the solution provided by him of the problems emerging out of the existence of the India states can not be avoided. For this reason or that the Indian States people were a neglected lot, the Congress policy from the very beginning was to leave the Indian States alone. There were some amongst the Congressmen who looked upon the Indian princes" as the visible representation of India's past glory" and there were others who saw in Indian States "self-Government in action." Least did they know that it was not the love of India's past glory, but their own self-interrest, which provided reason to the British Government to continue the princes' existence. It was Lord Canning who soon after mutiny said that "It was long ago said by Sir John Malcolm that if we made all-India into districts, it was not in the nature of things that our Empire should

last fifty years; but that if we should keep a number of native states without political power, but as loyal instruments, we should exist in India as long as our naval supremacy was maintained." Lord Canning proceeds "of the substantial truth of his opinion I have no doubt, and the recent events have made it more deserving of our attention than ever." Thus did the Indian States spring into existance their justification being consolidation and strengthening of the British rule. The Princes on their part fully justified Malcolm's remarks. Describing the condition of his subjects, the Maharaja of Kotah wrote to the Viceroy on 28th August 1909. "My own sujects are all engaged in their agricultural pursuits, and hardly anybody reads a newspaper and the knowledge of the fact that there are some political activities going on in British India is limited only to some people amongst the upper classes and some state servants."

Kotah's letter was in answer to a circular letter of the Viceroy addressed to the Princes directing them to prevent progressive ideas from percolating into their States. Other Princes also wrote in a similar vein. With the growth of a revolutionary movement in India, the British Government now rivetted its attention more and more on Indian States as its last retreat. The Princes were organized in a "Chamber of Princes."

It was proposed that the Indian Federation would constitute of Provinces and the Indian States, and the Princes would act as hereditary Provincial Heads. The States' subjects were nowhere in the picture, and in all matters of interest to them, they were to be represented by the Princes who were described as their "natural leaders." The Princes were encouraged to take their stand on time worn treaties and thus stand as a bulwark against the rising onslaught of democracy. But seeing even all this, the Congress stuck to its policy of non-interference in Indian States. If the things had taken the course visualised by the British Government and the Princes, the problem would no doubt have baffled every attempt at a solution. Pandit Jawahar Lal saw all this. Even at the cost of expresssng an open disagreement with some of his colleagues, he raised his voice against all this as early as 1929 when in his Presidential Address he said at Lahore Congress "I must frankly confess that I am a socialist and a republican, and am no believer in kings and princes." Side by side with this bold declaration, Pandit Jawahar Lal organized an All-India organization by name States' Peoples Conference which provided a platform for the States' peoples who were till then a backward and a disorganized lot. Within a few years, this organization became a formidable organization with its branches all over the country, though much to the disappointment of Kotah

and other princes who had built many a castle on the fact that "their subjects were engaged in agricultural pursuits only and hardly anybody read a newspaper." The result was a general awakening amongst the States' subjects. Many movements were started by them in which many a prince had to eat the humble-pie. And when the time of leaving India by British came, the Princes though they had succeeded in securing a verdict of independence from the outgoing British, and were in fact busy building and nourishing dreams of an independent sovereignty, found themselves squeezed out by the pressure exerted by the Indian democracy on one side and on the other by their own subjects, who far from being the docile and backward creatures of Kotah variety, were now fired with a potential revolutionary zeal to secure their own freedom. Had not Pandit Jawahar Lal with the keen political foresight that he has, caught the time by the forelock and organized the States' people in time, it would have been really a very tough job for even the tallest amongst the Indian leaders to find a solution of this formidable problem in the manner it has been found. The closest parallel to the situation thus created would have been that of the Portuguese Goa. If Portuguese have their helpers, the Princely Order had no less,

For Kashmir Jawahar Lal brought a new message and a new hope and gave a

real shape and form to the movement which was till then not very clear in its aims and objects. He planted the young sapling of nationalism in Kashmir and nourished it under his own tender care and guidance which by the time India came to be partitioned had grown into a mighty tree which provided shelter to many a weary traveller who ran away from the scorching heat of communal fires which were ablaze then in the neighbouring Province of the Punjab. The lesson of nationalism had gone so deep in the minds of the people here that when the time of opting with India or Pakistan came, the leadership of Kashmir which was predominantly Muslim, with one voice declared for India. This was a great victory for the forces of nationalism and an equally great triumph for the ideal of secularism.

Pandit Jawahar Lal is yet in the thick of the battle. It is plainly visible to anybody that destiny has earmarked many an achievement yet for him. But it needs being stated here that he has always had the greatest measure of co-operation available to him from everybody including his own house-people. His sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit who has received her political training and inspiration from her great father, Pandit Moti Lal, has always worked in close co-operation with her brother. She came to Kashmir in 1933 and was hardly thirty-three then. Least could it be known then that

there was such a spark in her soul, which in 1945 produced a blazing fire which burnt to ashes all the evil effects of a vicious propaganda which was set afloat in America by interested quarters with the active cooperation of some Indians, themselves. She was arrested on 12th August 1942 three days after Gandhiji's arrest. After having remained in jail for nearly a year, she was released. In November 1944 she left India and landed at San Francisco in April 1945. The Conference of the United Nations was held in May 1945. India was represented there by Ramaswami Mudaliar and Feroz Khan Noon who were the nominees of the British Government. At the very outset she challenged the representative character of the so-called Indian representation at the Conference and declared "I desire to make it clear that the so-called Indian representatives have not the slightest representative character. They have no sanction, no mandate from any responsible parties in India. They are merely British Government's nominees. The newspaper comment on this declaration may be given in the words of a prominent journalist Mr Iftone, who said that "Indian delegates have been chosen without consultation of Indian parties or political leaders, most of whom are in jail, including the far-seeing Nehru *who would have shone* even in the gathering of giants." Many Conferences were addressed by her. At one such Conference Mr Feroz Khan Noon who along with his

companion was according to a newspaper report having "Sleepless nights" sent his stenographer Khan to heckle her. The newspaper comments on this episode may be given in the words of Pasbom of the Associated Press of America that :-

> "It must have been most uncomfortable for his boss to learn today that the efforts of, his stooge instead of disrupting Mrs Pandit's press conference have boomranged and Mrs Pandit has received much wider publicity both at the radio and the press than she might have otherwise. Yesterday's evening papers and this morning's papers have given her a prominent space with pictures. One paper had a big picture of Mrs Pandit being garlanded by Amritlal Seth and a small picture of Khan with his name and 'ejected from Conference'."

Though a rebel then with no official recognition, Mrs Pandit created a great and a lasting effect in America. At Baltimore she was given the highest official recognition, the Mayor having received her at the station and presented to her the keys of the city. Besides addressing press conferences and public meetings, she submitted a memorial also to the U. N. Conference and made out a strong plea for an immediate declaration

of Indian independence. She was given audience by President and Lady Truman. She entertained the foreign ministers of Egypt, Iran and Saudi Arabia etc, In short even in 1945 she made the voice of India heard in all quarters of the globe.

During freedom movement Mrs Pandit went to jail a number of times. In 1936 she was elected as a member of the U. P. Legislature and was later appointed as a Minister in the first popular Ministry. She is the first Indian woman Minister. The Ministry was a short-lived affair and had to resign soon after the outbreak of second world war, but yet her achievements in so short a period were in no way meagre or small. For the thoroughness with which she conducted her business as a Minister, she got praises and admiration from all and sundry. What followed next including her election to U. N. Presidentship is a matter of recent history and no detailed reference is called for here.

There is yet another great Kashmiri Pandit, Shri Kailas Nath Katju, [1] whose part

1. Pandit Kailas Nath's ancestors used to live in a Mohalla in Srinagar known as Kaithal where even now stands a temple known as Kathaleshwar. The residents of Kaithal are described in Kashmiri language as Kathij. This expression would mean in Kashmiri as one residing or belonging to Kaithal. Kathij in course of time became Kathju in India but in Kashmir they are known as Kathij.

in furtherance of the national movement has been indeed great.

A great Advocate and one of the ablest lawyers that Allahabad has ever produced with a very high monthly income, Pandit Kailas Nath enjoyed even before his political career began, a very high reputation for his honesty and integrity. He has ever been known as a person of very deep religious convictions, high moral principles, and ethical standards. Unmindful of the monetary loss and discomforts of a jail life he threw himself whole-heartedly in the national struggle and courted imprisonment more than once. He was appointed as Minister of Justice in U. P, in 1937. After independence he was appointed as Governor of Bengal and later his services were utilized in the Central Cabinet as Home Minister and defence Minister.

There are a good many other Kashmiri Pandits who also have contributed their mite to the national movement. No reference need be made to all of them, but the picture will remain incomplete if specific mention is not made of two Kashmiri ladies Shrimati Rameshwari Nehru and Shimati Lado Rani Zutshi. Shrimati Rameshwari has always been a true disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. The social uplift work which has been done by her has already created a place of honour for her all over India. Sh. Lado

Rani has always been a true Congressite, and she belonged to the first batch of public spirited women who took to Congress work with zeal and seriousness.

There have been other Kashmiri Pandits who though not Congressmen, have also played their part on the Indian political stage. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru who for decades remained a leading light of the liberal party has by dint of his clarity of thought and cleanliness of action combined with a great intellectual eminence succeeded in carving a place for himself in the country's history. Even his worst critics have never denied what has been described by C. F. Andrews as "his rugged honesty of purpose". Sir Tej was essentially a great constitutional lawyer. Any mention of civil disobedience or non-cooperation greatly annoyed him. His legal training had made him over-conservative in action. He was appointed as a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council in 1921 when non-cooperation movement was at its highest, but resigned much before his term of office expired. It is said that the Viceroy (Lord Reading) always relied on his counsel, but Sir Tej was also frank enough in giving quite unpalatable evidence. So for as the harsh treatment meted out to Indians outside India was concerned, Sir Tej always raised his voice in the frankest and most indignant manner against it. He attended as a representative

at all the three Round Table Conferences held in England to frame a constitution for India.

Pandit Hirday Nath Kunzru[1] has remained a leading light of the Servants of India Society for quite a number of years and has done good service to the country in an un-ostentatious manner.

There have been a number of Kashmiri Pandits who have contributed their mite to the building of modern India as great educationists. Pandit Jagat Narayan Malla, a leading Advocate of his time remained the Vice-Chancellor of Lucknow University for a number of years. His part in organizing the University has been admitted by everybody. He was appointed as a member of the Hunter Committee constituted by the British Government in 1919 to hold an inquiry into the Martial law regime in the Punjab. By his wonderful cross-examination of General Dyer and others, which created a India-wide sensation then, he exposed in its entirety the hollowness of the Government case. He was later elected to the Assembly and became a Minister under the Dyarchy regime. Pandit Iqbal Narayan Gurtu was the Vice-Chancellor of Allahabad University and Diwan Anand Kumar[2] has now been for many years as the Vice-Chancellor

1. He is a son of Pandit Ajudhya Nath Kunzru.
2. He is a son of Raja Narindra Nath.

of the Punjab University. After the partition, the University was well-nigh ruined, but by his assiduous work he succeeded in resuscitating it.

Before closing this chapter reference may be made to the contribution made to the Urdu literature and poetry by the Kashmiri Pandits during this period. Pandit Daya Shankar Nasim, who died in 1843 A. D. at an early age of thirty two is even now counted as a great poet. He has composed a poem Guli Bakawli, which has elecited highest praise from all literatery circles. Pandit Rattan Nath Dar besides being a poet of no mean order has made a collosal service to the Urdu prose. His Fasana Azad, in which he has depicted the life of Nawabs of Lucknow is the first Novel in Urdu Language. To Pandits Brij Narayan Chakbast and Bishan Narayan Dar reference has been made earlier, but then as long as Urdu language lives, the names of Pandits Tribhuwan Nath Sapru Hijr Amar Nath Madan, Janki Nath Madan, Brij Mohan Dattatriya Kaifi, Pandit Hargopal Kaul "Khasta", [1] Pandit Nand Lal Talib, Dina Nath Mast, Master Zind Kaul and about two hundred other Kashmiri Pandit poets will also live as those of great poets.

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1. Pandit Sheo Narayan Fotedar M. P. is his daughter's son.

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